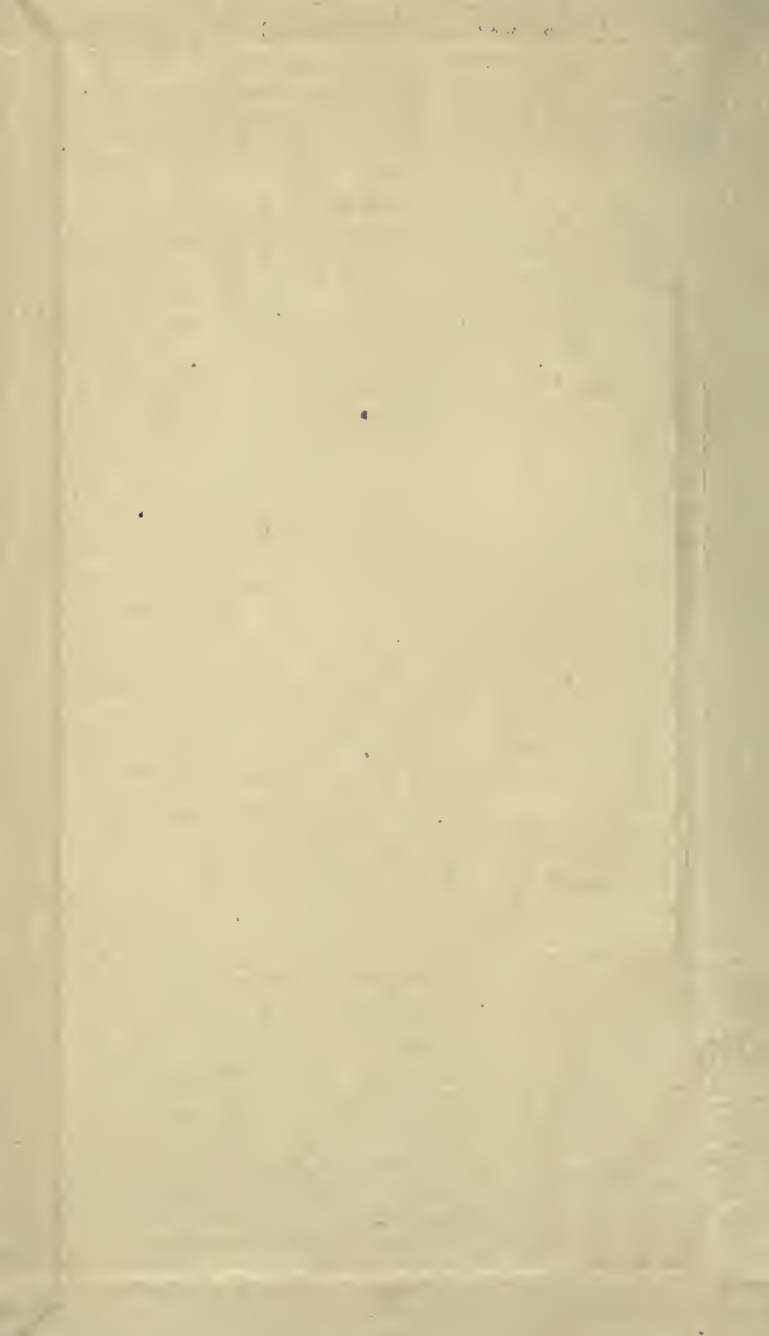


THE SECOND CENTURY

READINGS IN CHURCH HISTORY

J. E. FINEY, ED.


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THE
SECOND CENTURY
BEING A SERIES OF READINGS
IN CHURCH HISTORY FOR LENT
AND OTHER TIMES

BY
J. P. WHITNEY, B.D.

LONDON:
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PREFACE

THESE readings in the Church history of the second century may be useful, it is hoped, for use both in church and privately. They aim at giving a simple account of a period, sometimes supposed to be very difficult, sometimes very chaotic, and for both these reasons much neglected. I have tried to give the ordinary reader some information about the greater characters, the Christian literature, and the Church life of the second century. Many devout Christians know little about them, although there is every reason why an earnest and otherwise well-informed Churchman should know something of the Early Church.

But I have a further hope that this little book may lead some of its readers to study Church history further in larger modern books or through translations, at any rate, in some of the early Christian writers themselves. If they do this they will understand their New Testament better; they will understand and love their own Church better. To see Christian worship in its earlier days, to know what S. Ignatius said or S. Irenæus taught, how the Apologists pleaded the Christian cause and described the Christian way of life—all these are, happily, both easy and profitable. To help those who may wish to do this I have added a list of books which they will find useful.

The translations of the passages quoted are, as a rule, from the volumes in "Early Church Classics."

It is impossible for anyone who loves the history of the Church not to express his reverence for the great name of Lightfoot; for one who was once a Lightfoot scholar in Ecclesiastical History at Cambridge it would be wrong not to do so. Accuracy, knowledge, and reverence were once the characteristics of our English theologians. Dr. Lightfoot, in his studies of the second century, showed us all these at their best, and it is to be hoped that English scholars, throwing off German influences, will now happily return to the paths where he is our guide.

J. P. WHITNEY.

S. EDWARD, K. & M., 1918.

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LIST OF BOOKS

LARGER HISTORIES.

- DUCHESNE**: The Early History of the Church. Vol. I. (Translated.) Murray, 1909. (The best history of the Early Church.)
- HARNACK**: The Mission and Expansion of Christianity. 2 vols. Williams and Norgate, 1908. (A full account with useful maps.)
- BIGG**: The Origins of Christianity (edited by Strong). Oxford, 1909. (Useful in its divisions of the subject.)
- GWATKIN**: Early Church History to A.D. 313. 2 vols. Macmillan, 1909. (Vivid in its sketches of cities and characters, especially Tertullian. The conclusions would not always be accepted.)
- W. M. RAMSAY**: The Church in the Roman Empire before A.D. 170. Hodder and Stoughton. (Specially useful with regard to the persecutions and the letter of Pliny.)
- LIGHTFOOT**: The Apostolic Fathers. (Larger edition, and also in one volume.)
- LIGHTFOOT**: Essays on Supernatural Religion.
- HORT**: The Christian Ecclesia.

SMALLER BOOKS.

- PULLAN**: The Church of the Fathers, A.D. 98-461. Rivingtons.
- F. J. FOAKES JACKSON**: History of the Christian Church to A.D. 451.
- BURTON**: History of the Christian Church. S.P.C.K. (Up to the accession of Constantine; an old work, but plain and still useful.)
- REYNOLDS AND BINDLEY**: Witnesses to the Christian Creed from Ancient Writers. S.P.C.K.
- A. J. MACLEAN**: Recent Discoveries illustrating Early Christian Worship. S.P.C.K.
- H. SCOTT HOLLAND**: The Apostolic Fathers. (In the "Fathers for English Readers." S.P.C.K.)
- F. E. WARREN**: The Liturgy and Ritual of the Ante-Nicene Church. S.P.C.K.
- A. PLUMMER**: The Church of the Early Fathers.

- A. CARR: The Church in the Roman Empire. (Both in "Epochs of Church History." Longmans.)
 W. W. CAPES: Early Roman Empire; and the Age of the Antonines. (Both in "Epochs of Ancient History." Longmans.)

IN EARLY CHURCH CLASSICS (S.P.C.K.).

(English Translations of Early Christian Writings.)

- The Epistles of S. Ignatius. J. H. Srawley. 2 vols.
 The Epistle of the Gallican Churches (Lyons and Vienne). T. H. Bindley. (Includes also the Passion of S. Perpetua.)
 S. Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna. Blomfield Jackson.
 The Epistle of S. Clement of Rome. J. A. P. Gregg.
 The Epistle to Diognetus. L. B. Radford.
 The Shepherd of Hermas. C. Taylor. 2 vols.
 The Doctrine of the Twelve Apostles. C. Bigg. (This is the Didache.)
 Who is the Rich Man that is being saved? By Clement of Alexandria. P. Barnard.
 Tertullian on the Testimonies of the Soul, and The "Prescription" of Heretics. T. H. Bindley.
 S. Irenæus against the Heresies. (The chief passage translated and the rest abridged.) F. R. Montgomery Hitchcock.

The Apostolic Fathers. 2 vols., including S. Clement of Rome (I. and II.), S. Ignatius, S. Polycarp, the Didache, S. Barnabas, The Shepherd of Hermas, The Martyrdom of Polycarp, An Epistle to Diognetus, edited by Kirsopp Lake. (2 vols., Loeb Classical Library.)

Translations of the Fathers are also to be found in the Library of the Fathers (Oxford), and in the Ante-Nicene Christian Library (Edinburgh).

THE SECOND CENTURY

ERRATA

- Page 10, line 5 from end. omit " young."
- Page 13, line 1, transpose " fulness " and " stature."
- Page 18, line 11, read " Domitilla " for " Domatilla."
- Page 29, line 5 from end, read " Pergamum " for " Pergamus."
- Page 83, line 8 from end, read " easily " for " easy."
- Page 92, line 10, insert " not " before " against."
- Page 117, line 13, read " it " for " they."
- Page 117, line 14, read " its " for " their."
- Page 122, line 5 from end, read " Gnostics " for " Gnostic."
- Page 126, line 15, read " different worlds " for " another world."
- Page 130, line 15, read " formulation " for " formation."
- Page 133, insert " a " before " new creation."

feeling of the Church's unity and the quickened by his stay in Rome, the seat of Empire; we can see this from the Epistles written in his captivity. And, further, as he travelled from place to place, he came to know more

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The Epistles of S. Ignatius. J. H. Srawley. 2 vols.

The Epistle of the Gallican Churches (Lyons and Vienne). T. H. Binkley. (Includes also the Decree of S. Basil.)

THE SECOND CENTURY

I.

THE HISTORY OF THE CHURCH.

As by our birth we become members of a human family and also of a State, so by our Baptism we are made members of the Church. It is easy to talk about the ties of family and the duties they bring; it is easy, too, to talk about nationality, allegiance, and citizenship. Yet, after all, we only get to know these things really in the ordinary course of life, and as we honestly try to understand them in practice. It is the same with the Church and our membership of it. We think at once of "the Kingdom of Heaven," of our "fellow-citizenship with the saints," of "the household of God," and so on. In his vision S. John saw "the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven"; living where he did, he knew more of city-communities, with their varied life and interests, than he did of kingdoms or even of the Roman Empire which ruled his world. But were he living to-day, he would perhaps rather take a mighty Empire as a larger comparison. S. Paul, too, had his feeling of the Church's unity and life quickened by his stay in Rome, the seat of Empire; we can see this from the Epistles written in his captivity. And, further, as he travelled from place to place, he came to know more

fully what his Roman citizenship implied, and therefore he came to value it more highly.

In the ordinary course of everyday life, family and political relations, which might be talked about as mere abstract ideas, are thus clothed with life, and become full of the most sacred and far-reaching associations. It is the same with the idea of our membership in the Church: it is good to learn from the Church Catechism what it means, but it is only in the course of our experience that we come really to understand it. We learn it from life itself as fresh graces clothe it and fresh associations gather around it every day we live. As the end of his life draws near, the old man dreams of the mother who nursed him, of the brother who played with him long ago, or it may be, like Jacob, of the wife he buried afar in his youth. In the same way the Church, which has had its experiences and known a varied life, does well to look back. For so alone can we, its members, in our time and our place, understand, with a fulness that only time can give, the deepest things that men can debate or philosophers define.

The family sometimes, and the nation always, further speak to us, not only of duties and affections in the present, but also of stories from the past, of histories from long ago, of heroes and ancestors who wrought for us and have long passed away. It is thus that the Great War, so full of the present, has yet forced us to look back upon the past, to recall its achievements and to learn from its failures. By looking upon the past and those who were then in the places given to us to-day we inherit in thought, as in fact, their experiences, their conquests, their responsibilities, and their hopes. So, too, it is with the Church.

As we read of its past and learn from its saints we widen our experiences, we enrich our brotherhood; with those and through those who, without us, were not made perfect, we draw nearer to God and learn more of His ways. "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost," which meant so much to them and did so much for them, become more to us ourselves. It is thus, and with a proper reverence, that we turn to the history of the Church, which we can never ignore and should never forget.

II.

THE NEW TESTAMENT.

The history of the Church properly and fully begins with the New Testament record. But, just as for the history of a nation we must know something of its territory before its people came there, and of their history before they did so—just as, for instance, we must know something of Britain and of our English forefathers in their first Continental home—so we must bear in mind the history of the Jewish Church before we come to Christianity. For the New Testament is built upon the foundation of the Old Testament. Yet it is true, none the less, to say that the history of the Christian Church begins with the New Testament. But, unfortunately, many people draw a sharp line between their study of the New Testament and their study of Church history. Some scholars, for instance, make a special study of one or the other, but they rarely study the two together or consecutively. General readers do the same, and for the

most part, indeed, neglect the history of the Church altogether. The result is we miss much of what the New Testament can teach us, and never properly understand Church history at all. And, further, we come to think that the Church in Apostolic days was something very different from what it has been since or is to-day. We miss the continuity and unity of what, after all, is one continuous and growing history. By sharply severing the Church of the New Testament from the Church of to-day we weaken, in the first place, the hold of the New Testament upon our lives, and in the second place we make it almost unreal. So, to avoid these two great mistakes, we should lay the foundation of our Church history study where it should be laid—in the New Testament itself.

The Acts of the Apostles is the first, the greatest, and the most inspiring of all Church histories. It tells us how the Church of Christ, strong in its inspiration and strung up to its mission, went out into the world as Christ's Body to do Christ's work. It received from the Apostles, who were the witnesses of His life and His resurrection, the message of the Incarnation. Ever since the Church has been trying to understand for itself and to teach to the world what the Incarnation means. The Creeds, the teaching or doctrine of the Church, Christian theology, are all meant to express and explain the Incarnation. They do this in teaching, in thought, and philosophy. What they do for us in the field of mind and thought the Church, with its call and its duties, does for us in actual life. Although we can learn much of Christianity by reading about it and by thinking about it, we can only learn it properly by living it. And that can only be done in the Church itself. Christian theology as taught

us by the Church, and Christian life as lived in the Church, must always be joined together.

No one is really without a theology, although it may be a very ignorant or a very poor or a greatly confused theology. The theology of the man in the street, for instance, of whom we hear so much, is often poor and mistaken, because he only sees or thinks about the things in the street; and, after all, there is much more in life than is to be found there. But the Church brings to us, as it has done to Christians in all ages, the theology of the Incarnation, which alone explains and redeems the world. To teach that theology and to mould us by it is the mission of the Church; but before it can teach its message it must understand it, and this the Church can only do in its continued life. Its efforts to think out the full theology of the Incarnation give us the history of Christian thought. But the Church had to live and act as well as think; and it is this continued life and action "in Christ" (as S. Paul puts it) which is Church history.

As the Church went its way with its message to the world Christ was with it, and His Sacraments brought to it His grace. The life of the Church was "hid with Christ in God," and the history of the Church, to begin with in New Testament days and afterwards in all the generations down to ourselves, is the living story of that continued life with all its power. Christians took the place of the Israel of the Old Testament: they were now, because of Christ, "a royal priesthood, an holy nation" (1 S. Peter ii. 9). This was their heritage, and in Christ they realized its fulness. The second century shows us this ideal wrought into fact.

III.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.

There are many ways in which we can read the New Testament, and each way has its own spiritual gain for us. At the outset of our meditations upon Church history, let us look at the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistles as our first and greatest records. When we come to study any period of history, it is well to have, in the first place, a consecutive story, and then, in the second place, some letters which illustrate it. Here for our special purpose the Acts give us the one, and the Epistles give us the other.

The study of these books can be made very difficult and exhaustive; it can call forth all the varied knowledge and the trained skill of great scholars like our own Dr. Lightfoot, formerly Bishop of Durham. For the history of the Church must be studied, like any other history, with a single wish to find out the truth, and, therefore, with the same methodical criticism which is used in all other history. Indeed, it should call for even a greater love of truth and for more devoted learning, because it has to do with the Church of Christ, who is Himself the very Truth.

We are not thinking, however, of great scholars, but only of ordinary Christian people, who, in their own place and in their own way, just as scholars in theirs, should know something of the Church, with its long history and its vast experience. To do this properly we must begin with the Acts. With this help we must see the Gospel or message of salvation which the Church brought to mankind, the new light of revelation it threw on the world, its life, and its difficulties. Then we must follow out its

growth; we must see how the Apostles, with their teaching, stepped from Palestine into other lands. We can see the growth of their society, with its brotherhood in Christ; we see the authority wielded by the Apostles; we see, too, the close local union of the Churches in Antioch, in Corinth, and elsewhere. We see the growth of its ministry: the deacons to attend to the more secular work of the community, and then, for the more spiritual work the presbyters or priests or elders; above them stood the Apostles, who administered the Church, and whose government in it was a bond of unity in Christ. Each Christian shared to the full in the life of the little local Church, but, while the Apostles lived, it was impossible for him to forget that he belonged to the larger body, to the whole Church of the First-born. If a Christian had to pass, like the Apostles or S. Paul himself, from one city with its congregation to another, he received everywhere and anywhere a Christian welcome. There were no strangers in the Christian Church, and so he realized, what strangers and travellers so often miss to-day, the real brotherhood in Christ.

Looking at the Acts, we see we cannot separate one part of Christian life from another. Christian doctrine, sacraments, prayer, worship, morality, discipline, and duties, all blended together; all were founded upon the Incarnation, and all were realized in the Church itself. Christ had laid hold of the sinner, and now he lived in Christ. The Church, with its brotherhood, its worship, its means of grace, was the home of his soul; as he learnt what it could be to him he learnt more of Christ. More and more he felt through the Church the good hand of his God upon him. In it he had the way of Life itself—the Way, as it is called in the Acts,

It has been, and indeed still is, a common mistake to think of religion as mainly individual, something for each person by himself or herself alone. It is true that in the Acts we have some sermons aimed at the conversion of individuals, and we have stories of individual conversions. But the convert at once takes up his place and his work inside the Church under Christ and with his brethren. The life of the Body, the Corporate or Church life, is something greater than the isolated individual life which it nourishes and protects. Through the Church, with its Apostles, its sacraments, its ministry, and its ordered brotherhood, the Christian finds his union with Christ strengthened in a way that never could have been done for a mere individual without his brethren and the Church.

To-day, again, we often speak of the machinery of the Church, and sometimes we hear of apologies for mentioning dry matters of organization. But it is through organization that life expresses itself and affects the world. Through national organization, for instance, the life of the nation impresses itself upon each generation as it comes, and so moulds the future. We may take a comparison. The story of England, of English liberty, and of the British Empire, would have been impossible without the growth of the English Constitution—the central Government, on the one hand, and local self-government, with its training and its habits, on the other hand. And yet this constitutional growth, which has been, and still is, one of the mightiest things in the world, might be waved aside as a dry matter of mere organization. One lesson of any part of history is the immense importance of organization. If we look at it as lifeless and regard it as unimportant, it naturally does become

to us dead and deadening. It is for us to make it living and to let it mould our lives. Then it lives for us, and we live in it. That is one great thing we learn from the Acts, with its story of the Church, its vivid life and wondrous growth.

When we pass from the Acts to the Epistles we find much the same picture: organization underlies the whole spiritual life, supports it, and hands it on. But as is the case in letters about important things, which leave many things to be understood, the details only come out incidentally. In the pastoral Epistles to Timothy and Titus, belonging to the later years of S. Paul's life, the Church life is more settled and the organization is more complete. The Church has lived through nearly a generation; it had at first much to do with the Jewish Church out of which it had arisen, and it now had mainly to do with the Roman Empire beneath the rule of which it worked. The Apostles were passing away one by one; S. John alone was left, and he closes for us the New Testament with his vision, firstly, of the Lamb of God exalted over all, and, secondly, of the New Jerusalem coming down from heaven to be built up on earth. The Church was thus working out its message of the Incarnation.

IV.

S. JOHN AT EPHESUS.

After the capture of Jerusalem by the Roman army under Titus, which in A.D. 70 put an end to the Jewish rebellion, a great change came over the Church. The Christians had fled from Jerusalem to the neighbourhood of Pella beyond the Jordan, and soon ceased to seem a

mere sect among the Jews. Jewish hatred of them became bitterer, and the Roman Government, tolerant to religious sects unless they threatened the public peace, was gradually coming to see in the Church a dangerous rival to itself. So at length burst out the fires of persecution which light up the Apocalypse and the Epistles of S. Peter, S. James, and S. John. Soon even the mere name of Christian exposed its bearer to persecution.

The Church, however, had not only drawn itself together and overcome its internal dangers from Judaizing brethren, as we see in the Acts; it had not only, as we see from the Epistles, built up its local communities under Apostolic supervision; it had, furthermore, reached along the great Roman roads by the ordinary paths of trade to many great cities of the East, and it had even begun to touch some great cities of the West, such as Rome itself. Antioch in Syria, for instance, where the name of Christian first was given, became a new centre of missionary work. Asia Minor, above all, mainly through the special energy of S. Paul, was covered with a network of Churches.

At Ephesus S. John, according to a well-supported tradition, had found a home and rest from persecution. Here he gave himself to the care of the Churches; here, too, it was that Sunday after Sunday he preached on the text, "Little children, love one another"; here, too, according to more than one witness, he placed Bishops over the neighbouring Churches. S. Clement of Alexandria, who died early in the third century, tells us in his Homily about "The rich young man that was being saved," how from Ephesus S. John was called to the neighbouring districts of the Gentiles, in some to found new Churches, in others to appoint Bishops, in yet others to appoint to the ministry men pointed out by the Holy

Ghost. And the same writer tells us one very touching story of S. John.

When he came in the course of his work to one city, he saw there a young man of fine stature and enthusiastic spirit; him he commended "in the presence of the Church and of Christ" to the Bishop he had newly consecrated. The Bishop took the young man to his own home, nourished, educated, trained, and at last baptized him. Then, as if he had safeguarded himself by thus putting on him "the seal of the Lord," he relaxed his constant care, just as we, unhappily, so often let those who have been confirmed slip from our sight. Some young men of the city, "idle and dissolute," enticed the young Christian to their company, entertained him and persuaded him to go out with them to plunder. Little by little he yielded himself to evil, and at length committed a grave crime. Then, like a horse that has cast away the bridle, he rushed headlong to the precipice; he threw away the salvation of God, gathered around him a band of robbers, and, by force of mind and boldness in sin, became their captain.

The time came for another visitation by S. John, and after he had settled the ordinary business he turned to the Bishop and said: "Come, Bishop, give me back my pledge which Christ and I committed to you in the presence of the Church over which you preside." The Bishop at first did not understand, but when the Apostle said, "I ask for the young man and the soul of a brother," he answered weeping, "He is dead," explaining that he had gone astray and died to righteousness. S. John, who, as we remember, loved to see young men in their strength overcoming the evil one, was touched to tears, tore his garments in mourning, and asked for a horse at once; then he mounted and rode away to seek

the brigands. He fell into their hands and demanded their leader. When the captain recognized S. John he would have fled from him in shame, but the Apostle called out: "Why flee'st thou, my son, from me, thy father? Have pity on me, my son; fear not. There is still hope of life for thee. I will pray to Christ for thee; I will die for thee. Stay, and do believe that Christ has sent me." Then the penitent son drew near, "baptized, as it were, a second time in his own tears." The happy Apostle prayed over him, kissed him, led him home, and did not leave him until he had restored him to the Church. The prodigal son was at peace, and the young man had overcome the evil one.

This simple and beautiful story shows us the perils that Christians ran in a heathen world, but it shows us even more the spirit and power of Christ's Body doing Christ's work, seeking the sinner, and guarding him for the temple of God. The very Son of Thunder was filled with the melting heat of love, and in such a spirit the Church was overcoming the world.

So from the days of the Apostles, from the time of the New Testament writings, we pass into the second century, which had perils and dangers of its own. But we should be repeating a mistake often made if we thought there was any great breach, any sharp contrast, between the Apostolic age and the following, or, as it is often called, the sub-Apostolic age. We still see the power of Christ and the unity of the brotherhood, the Church teaching the Way of Life, built up, as it was, upon "the foundation of the Apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the head corner-stone." We follow the Church in its growth, not of corruption, but of power and life; not losing its hold upon the truth of the Incarnation, but

growing up into the fulness of the stature of Christ. It carried to the world, as it carried to the young convert of S. John, a message of hope. Hope is a Christian's virtue, and life in the Church was always a life of hope.

V.

S. IGNATIUS.

Somewhere about A.D. 112 a great and noble figure flashes before us in a great Christian tragedy as he passes from East to West. It is S. Ignatius treading his road of martyrdom from Antioch in Syria, where he was Bishop, to Rome, where, probably in the newly-built Coliseum, he laid down his life and so gained his crown. We know nothing of him before; we can only guess at the reason for his arrest, but by the help of his seven Epistles we can follow him from city to city in the custody of the soldiers—"ten leopards," as he called them—who guarded and ill-treated him on his way. Everywhere, from Smyrna to Philippi, his fellow-Christians either met him or sent messengers to greet him. At Smyrna he wrote four letters, one to the Romans, begging them not to use their influence to spare him martyrdom, as they were likely to do; he also wrote to Ephesus, Tralles, and Magnesia, cities which had sent their Bishops to greet him. At Troas, where he took ship, other friends met him, and thence he sent letters to Philadelphia and Smyrna, both places he had passed through, and to S. Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna, who was himself to be a martyr in years to come.

On his way to Rome he passed through Philippi, and the Christians there wrote, as he had begged them, to S. Polycarp, asking him to send the letter on to Antioch,

S. Ignatius's own city. And they also asked him to send them back copies of any letters the martyr had written. To this natural request we probably owe the preservation of the seven Ignatian letters which now, after centuries of controversy, are everywhere recognized as genuine records of the utmost importance. We, of the English Church, may well be proud that three learned Bishops of our own—Ussher, Pearson, and Lightfoot—were the champions of these letters, and proved them to be genuine. So now we can use them at their fullest and their best.

The Epistles not only reveal to us the thoughts and the character of the martyr Bishop himself, but give us a flashlight picture of the Church in his day, its belief, its organization, and its work. His whole heart was with his sorrowing flock at Antioch, where, after his arrest, quarrels had broken out, but he was gladdened as he went his way by hearing that they were once more at peace. One vivid impression comes upon us first of all: we find, as in the Acts and Epistles, that the local Churches are all bound to each other in a wonderful brotherhood and unity, in a community which knows no bounds of space. This unity was soon to be tested by days of fiery trials and long nights of heretical darkness. In the trial S. Ignatius rejoiced; he was more than ready (much like S. Paul) to be "poured out as a libation to God." Of the early heresies, a little more developed than those rebuked by S. Paul and S. John, but not so fully grown as the later Gnosticism, he had a horror; they were "strange herbage," "evil herbs whose husbandman was not Jesus Christ." To assert, as some of them did, that our Lord's Body was unreal, a phantom, was awful in his eyes. For his devotion to our Lord was passionate in

its fervour; the facts of His life on earth, from the Virgin Birth to the Passion and Resurrection, are always with him. For this passionate love of Christ he well deserved his name of "Theophorus," or "Bearer of God." In these respects he reminds us of the New Testament writers, although below them not only in inspiration, but in power. He bridges over the gap between them and still later days.

It has become a fashion with some modern teachers to see an opposition between love to Christ and devotion to the Church. A personal union with Christ is put on the one side, and a love for Church unity and organization on the other; to care for the organization is supposed in some way to lose hold on Christ, to sacrifice "spirituality" to "externals." This assumed antagonism would have seemed strange to S. Ignatius, who loved Christ above all, and yet loved the unity and organization of the Church, just because they led him to Christ and brought Christ near to him. He begs the Magnesians to "do all things in godly concord, the Bishop presiding after the pattern of God, and the presbyters after the pattern of the Council of the Apostles, with the deacons also, who are most dear to me, seeing they are entrusted with a service under Jesus Christ." So, too, he speaks of doing everything "along with your Bishop, who is worthy of all honour, and with the fitly woven coronal of your presbyters and the deacons, who are according to the mind of God. Submit yourselves to the Bishop and to one another." And again he says: "The noble presbytery, worthy of God, is fitted to the Bishop as the strings to a harp." Without the Bishop and the presbytery "there is no Church worthy of the name," and he exhorts them to "do nothing without the Bishop."

All this strict adherence to the Church organization was with S. Ignatius "to put on Christ," as a fact of actual life and brotherhood, not a mere spiritual belief of an isolated Christian. It reminds us of S. John's saying: "If we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sin." We think also of S. Paul's insistence upon unity. These Apostolic traditions S. Ignatius had learnt. He had come from Antioch in Syria, where memories of S. James and S. Simeon, both Bishops of Jerusalem, would naturally linger; he had passed through Asia Minor, where the later influence of S. John, "theologian and organizer," was strong.

We can understand that S. Ignatius, the first writer to use the expression "the Catholic Church," would, from his love of Christ and of brotherhood, lay stress upon the Eucharist. "Keep one Eucharist. There is one flesh of our Lord Jesus Christ and one cup unto union with His blood. There is one altar, as there is one Bishop with the presbyters and deacons." Just as in Apostolic times there were some who neglected "the assembling of themselves together," so S. Ignatius grieved to see some who "withheld themselves from Eucharist and prayer, because they confess not that the Eucharist is the flesh of our Saviour Jesus Christ." His teaching here, as on the Person of our Lord, was firm and simple, and woven into his life. In such a belief unto salvation he passed from East to West along the highway of martyrdom, rejoicing in the Church's life and quickening his brethren's zeal. At length in Rome he poured out his life as a libation to God while there was an altar ready, and Christians everywhere stood around, like a choir singing to the Father in Jesus Christ. In that choir we, too, can claim our place.

VI.

S. CLEMENT OF ROME.

In his Epistle to the Romans (probably written from Corinth about A.D. 55) S. Paul tells the Christians of the capital how he longs to visit them. Many of the converts there are known to him. To Rome all roads led, and in the natural course of commerce and travel Christians came and went from and to all parts. The Roman Church seems to have been made up of Jews and Gentiles, and the Apostle, in his Roman captivity (A.D. 59-61), was able to do much for them. From that first captivity under Nero he was set free, but later, although still under Nero, both he and his colleague S. Peter were, according to an almost certain tradition, martyred after some long stay there, when the great Neronian persecution broke out (A.D. 64). Thus the great capital of the West, which was, indeed, until the foundation of Constantinople in A.D. 330, also the capital of the world, had memorials and shrines of both Apostles. Thither pilgrims flocked, and the religious influence of Rome soon began to equal—for Christians, at any rate—its political importance.

Thus, in the great persecution under Nero, Rome comes forward in a blaze of light, although, except for that one moment, we have little beyond traditions, trustworthy, but incomplete. Then we come to S. Clement of Rome, Bishop of Rome about A.D. 95, and he has left us an Epistle to the Corinthians. Corinth, where S. Paul had sojourned long, was not only the meeting-place of Northern Greece and the Peloponnesus, but also a great trading-centre for men of all nationalities. Its Church there was made up of many elements, and with its vigorous

life and varied tendencies needed much guidance and self-control.

Clement was a name mentioned by S. Paul, and well known among Christians. Flavius Clemens, a cousin of the Emperor Domitian, was Consul in A.D. 95, and there are good reasons for supposing he was a Christian. He was put to death, and his wife Domitilla banished, in the very year of his Consulship. Like some other noble Romans, for Christianity had now penetrated to the upper classes, his family had given their cemetery, named after Domatilla, for Christian use. Thus began the story of the catacombs in Christian life. They were places of burial, not of secret worship or shelter; for worship, indeed, they were only used in reverent memorial of the faithful departed on the days of their birth into the other world. Around the name of Clement, or Clemens, much tradition and even romance grew up some two or three centuries later, but of the saint himself we know but little. It is not likely he was the Consul of that name; it is more likely that the writer of this Epistle—according to tradition the third Bishop of Rome—was a freedman (or slave set free) belonging to the household of Clement the Consul, and, as we judge from his use of the Old Testament, of Jewish descent. It may be that remains, still left, take us back to his day. In S. Clement's church at Rome, beneath the present building, is an older fourth-century church, and beneath that is a house possibly S. Clement's own. Near this, strangely enough, is an old temple of Mithras.

This Epistle to the Corinthians was called forth by a schism in their Church. Some Christians had tried to expel certain presbyters; why, we do not know. S. Clement wrote, in the name of the Roman Christians,

for his own name does not appear in the letter itself, to urge unity and obedience in a Church so well and widely known. Here again we see, as in the Ignatian Epistles, the interest taken by one Church in another; for Rome does not here claim any supremacy, although she offers advice and warning.

Churches, like individuals, have their characteristics, and they have also their defects, which, again like individuals, they must strive to overcome. Corinth had been in the days of S. Paul the abode of factions and strife, where Christians said to one another, "I am of Paul," "I am of Cephas," and so on. Some Christians had now expelled some presbyters or priests. S. Clement, who (cc. 42-44) describes the provision made by the Apostles for the government of the Church through a succession of bishops, says to them: "It is shameful, beloved, very shameful—nay, more, it is unworthy of your education in Christ—that it should be reported that the Church of Corinth, so long and firmly established as it is, should be divided against its presbyters at the bidding of one or two ringleaders. Nor has this report come to us alone; it has reached even them who do not hold with us, so that ye cover the name of the Lord with blasphemies, because of your folly, and besides are laying up danger for yourselves." "Who then among you is noble? who is compassionate? who is filled with love? Let him say: 'If I am the cause of variance and strife and division, I withdraw. I will depart whithersoever ye will. Only let the flesh of Christ be in peace under its appointed presbyters.' . . ." "Ye, therefore, that created the division, submit to your presbyters, and receive chastening unto repentance, bowing the knees of your heart. Learn to be in subjection." Thus, in the

very spirit of S. Paul, his disciple deals with the spirit of faction, never cast out from Corinth. His words are a fine lesson of Christian unity and primitive "discipline." And yet, faced by the "proved and overbearing masterfulness" of individual Christians, S. Clement has to repeat in his day the old warnings of S. Paul and of S. John.

It is only when all are at one that the Church can fully or fitly do its proper work and give its proper praise to God. To the happy harmony of the whole each part should lend its voice. It is so with the congregation; it is so with the Church at large. We can think of the Jew as teaching the majesty of God, of the Greek as teaching the love of all things beautiful and all that is grand in thought, of the Roman as teaching law and order. This lesson S. Clement gave with authority and power. In a fine passage, which may have inspired our great writer Hooker, he discourses on the order of the universe, the ocean, the plants, and the world at large. God was the giver of peace and harmony. "Beware, beloved, lest His many benefits become a judgment unto us all, if we live not worthy of Him and do with concord those things which are good and well-pleasing in His sight." The same thought comes in the Eucharistic prayer which ends the Epistle: "O, do Thou forgive us our transgressions and our unrighteousness and our faults and our weaknesses. . . . Grant peace and concord to us and to all that dwell upon the earth, . . . that we may obey Thy almighty and all-holy Name, and render submission to our rulers and governors upon the earth." In that obedience and order Christians who were one in Christ were to grow into one on earth.

VII.

THE LETTER OF PLINY.

In the Acts of the Apostles we see the Church confronted by the Jewish hierarchy and also by the Roman Empire. Much of its early history falls under these two heads. But after the fall of Jerusalem (A.D. 70) the Jews had lost political importance, and it is the action of the Roman Empire which mostly affects the Church. At the same time we find the Jews, with the subtle influence always gained by their race, instigating magistrates and rulers to attack the Christians.

In the second century the Empire was slowly changing its policy towards the Church. The Empire had its own ideal; it strove, for the most part, to do justice, to enforce order, and to give security for a quiet life. Its task was unity, not, however, the spiritual and organic unity sought by Christianity, but a unity gained by political means. But as experience teaches us, the world cannot be saved by politics. It needs Christ and Christianity.

Rome had its Pantheon, its temple of gods, into which it was ready to admit the gods of its subject races. Between all these and under Roman rule there was to be toleration. Had the claim of Christ admitted its entry in such an undenominational scheme Christianity might have been free from persecution. But the claim of Christ, then as now, was supreme and exclusive, and it was this feature of Christianity which laid it open to special treatment and peculiar persecution.

Under the Empire, moreover, a new worship of special power had grown up. Because the Empire aimed at something great, and wrought so much for the people

under it, its subjects came to venerate the Emperor as something holy and apart—first as personifying the genius of Rome, and then as a God upon earth. He stood to them for the wonderful majesty of Rome, and because of the political advantages offered by Rome some even of those who could not in their hearts believe it accepted it as a working system. Thus the worship of the Emperor became the rival of Christianity. The sharp persecution under Nero had, moreover, changed the position of the Christians. Numbers of them had perished at Rome. Tacitus, the Roman historian, who wrote about A.D. 115, tells us that after the fire in the city, to save himself, “Nero put in his own place as culprits, and punished with every refinement of cruelty, the men whom the common people hated for their secret crimes.” These were the Christians. To begin with, “some were seized and made to confess; then, on their information, a vast multitude was convicted, not so much of arson as of hatred for the human race. And they were not only put to death, but put to death with ignominy, being either dressed up in the skins of beasts to perish by the worrying of dogs, or else put on crosses to be set on fire, and when the daylight failed to be burnt for use as lights by night.” Christians, by their isolation among religious sects and by their very mode of life, were marked out as a people apart. Nero seized the chance of ready victims upon whom he might heap the hatred he himself deserved. The persecution thus begun at Rome by the Emperor himself was probably copied elsewhere, and the popular hatred aroused by the peculiarities of Christians could have its own way under Imperial leadership against the growing Church.

We catch a glimpse of the Church's progress under

the new conditions early in the second century. In A.D. 112 Pliny the younger, who had just been made Governor of Bithynia and Pontus on the southern coast of the Black Sea, sent to the excellent Emperor Trajan a letter about the Christians. Pliny was an able lawyer who had taken part in some trials of Roman Governors for corruption and extortion; his own province had suffered from such Governors, and it was now his task to reorganize it. He was upright and conscientious, and often wrote to the Emperor for guidance and for rules he could apply. His correspondence has, strangely enough, come down to us in a single manuscript copied about A.D. 1500, and lost since then; of its genuineness, however, there can be no doubt. We may compare this lack of evidence with the 1,000 or more manuscripts which exist for the New Testament.

Pliny writes to the Emperor that, as he had never taken part in trials of Christians, he did not know what was the exact crime or what allowance could be made in special cases. He did not know whether "punishment was given to the mere name apart from secret crimes, or to the secret crimes connected with the name." So he describes to the Emperor how he dealt with the accused. He asked them if they were Christians; if they confessed, he repeated the question twice, and if necessary a third time with threats of punishment. If they still persisted, he ordered them to execution. For, whatever Christianity might mean, such obstinacy he held to deserve punishment. Roman citizens he sent to Rome for trial, which reminds us of S. Paul's case, and also of the journey of S. Ignatius. When some of these charges had been investigated more accusations came in, and an anonymous letter had accused many people.

The procedure was that those who denied being or having been Christians, or were willing to recant, said to the gods a prayer dictated by Pliny, offered wine and incense to Trajan's statue, which had been brought into the court for the purpose, and, moreover, cursed Christ. Perhaps the most interesting part of the letter is that in which Pliny relates the account given by some long-lapsed Christians of their worship and practices. To this account we shall return. But for the present we pass it over to notice the Emperor's answer.

Trajan approved what Pliny had done; no general law could be laid down. Christians were not to be sought out; anonymous accusations should not be admitted, because they were unworthy of the time. If any, however, were accused and convicted, they must be punished, but anyone denying the charge and worshipping the gods should be pardoned. Thus Trajan's answer shows fairness and justice, but it remains clear that after his answer (or rescript), as before, the mere charge of being a Christian, if not refuted, laid a person open to execution. To confess the name of Christ was to risk a speedy death. Thus the Empire had taken a definite stand against the Christian Church; only the tolerance of an Emperor or local Governors or the tacit tolerance of their neighbours could save Christians from death. Such favour might often be shown, but it was always uncertain. A long struggle—to last two centuries—had already begun: on the one side the Church, on the other side the Empire.

VIII.

THE WAY OF LIFE.

We have noticed the opposition between the Empire and the Church. The worship of the Emperor was easy and natural; it was, indeed, compulsory upon all the soldiers in the Roman army, upon nearly all grades of the civil service, and upon all who sought anything of a public career. Its acceptance or refusal might at any instant be demanded from anyone. This was the early form of a worship of politics into which it is easy to fall even to-day. But for long periods and in various districts, through the indifference of rulers or through local causes, some churches might enjoy an uncertain peace. Yet the Church, even when not in actual peril, was pressed upon from all sides by a heathen society with heathen morals.

The contrast between the Church and the world was sharp and great. Heathen customs were prevalent and strict, leavening all society with its amusements and duties. The Christian was bound to stand out as peculiar; if he was consistent, he was certain to give offence. He might escape a charge before a magistrate, but he could not always, without disloyalty to Christ, avoid the charge of being peculiar—"hating the human race," as Tacitus put it. He seemed over-careful to avoid what were to others mere harmless social usages or recognition of things as they were. We are often reminded of the old Corinthian difficulty, with which S. Paul had to deal, as to whether it was lawful to eat meat offered to idols or not. Thus, among the Egyptian papyri we have a second-century invitation "to dine at the table of the

Lord Serapis in the house of Claudius Serapion on the 16th at 9 o'clock." Many a Christian must have received such invitations to feasts of a deity like Serapis. We often forget how the early Christians, in the midst of people with a different moral standard, were marked out by their Christian peculiarities. It is not an easy thing to live as a Christian among a non-Christian public. The early Church had to face this difficult task, and we in our own days, and in a world which does not follow the Christian ideal, may take courage from its example and its success. But for the conquest of such a world we must place ourselves under the strictest discipline. To give this discipline was the work of the Church, with its controlled and ordered Way of Life. It was through this training that it gained victory in its warfare. "For Christians are in the world what the soul is in a body," said (about A.D. 140) the unknown writer of the Epistle to Diognetus. "They live in countries of their own, but simply as sojourners; they share the life of citizens; they endure the lot of foreigners. . . . Their existence in the flesh is on earth, but they live not after the flesh. They obey the established laws, but they surpass the laws in their own lives. . . . They are abused, and they bless; they are insulted, and they repay insult with honour. They do good, and are punished as evil-doers, and in their punishment they rejoice as finding new life therein. The Jews war against them as aliens, the Greeks persecute them, and yet they that hate them can state no ground for their enmity."

But none the less the Christians, although hated, were "the soul of the world." "The soul, when it is stinted of food or drink, thrives the better; so Christians, when they are punished, increase daily all the more. So

great is the position to which God has appointed them, and which it is not lawful for them to refuse."

It was this superiority of Christian life which attracted earnest converts from among the better people. It was not worth while deserting the world for a Church which differs little from it. But a Church with a high ideal and a practice akin to it did attract the better heathen. The Church was not conformed to this world, but was transformed in itself, and the secret of this change may be found in its worship. Pliny, in his investigations, heard both from lapsed Christians and from women slaves under torture what the Christian peculiarities were.

The sum of their fault was, he says, "that it was their habit, on a fixed day, to assemble before daybreak and sing by turns a hymn to Christ as a God; and that they bound themselves with an oath (*sacramentum*), for no crime, but only not to commit theft or robbery or adultery, not to break their word, and not to deny a deposit when demanded. After this was done the custom was to depart, and meet together again to take food of an ordinary and harmless kind; and even this (they said) they had given up doing after the issue of my edict by which, in accordance with your command, I had forbidden the existence of clubs." When he examined or tortured the slaves he found nothing evil such as he had expected, but merely "a wicked and arrogant superstition." The belief of the Christians, setting them against the society and politics of the time, seemed to him wrong, while the firmness with which they held it was, in his eyes, almost insane.

A word of explanation is needed about one thing in Pliny's letter. We remember that in the Corinthian Church S. Paul had to regulate the Love-Feast, or *Agape*,

which was then associated with the Eucharist. Clearly the Christians in Bithynia had kept up the *Agape*, or the meeting together again after their first worship to partake of ordinary food. But Trajan had become alarmed at the number of secret clubs, many of them with their social feasts, because such associations seemed dangerous to the State, and he had therefore ordered them to be dissolved. This order Pliny had to execute in his province, and it seems likely that now, to avoid the suppression of the Church, the *Agape* was given up, while the Holy Eucharist kept its old place as the centre of Christian life and worship. Thus, what had been a cause of abuse disappeared.

But the picture which impresses itself most of all upon us is that of the Christians bound together as a chosen people, knit together by their worship, holy before God, and striving for holiness in their lives. They had their Way of Life in Christ, and they kept to it with firmness.

IX.

THE MARTYRS OF LYONS.

We have seen how the worship of the Emperor was coming face to face with the worship of Christ, and as Christianity spread the contest became more severe. Upon Asia Minor in the East, and upon Gaul in the West, this Imperial worship had special hold. In Gaul, Lyons was not only the meeting-place for a political assembly from the three Gallic provinces, but also the scene of a great festival of this Emperor-worship. From such a celebration Christians naturally stood aloof, and were therefore charged with bad citizenship and hatred of their

fellow-men. At the time of one such festival we hear that riots against the Christians began, probably in A.D. 177, although possibly earlier, in A.D. 155. We have an account of the persecution which followed in a touching letter from the Churches of Vienne and Lyons, addressed, as they say, "to the brethren throughout Asia and Phrygia, who hold the same faith and hope of redemption with us." Here again we see the wondrous way in which Christianity was joining together distant parts of the world. We do not know, indeed, how Christianity had reached to Gaul, although much later on tradition gave its fanciful account of strange voyages by Apostles, the Marys, and followers of S. Paul. Probably, however, it reached Gaul, as it was to reach Britain later, in the ordinary course of trade and travel. Gaul was entered most easily from the south, where the oldest province (now Provence) lay, and where Marseilles (Massilia) was then, as now, a port where Eastern and Western races met. In Lyons, which lay so open to the south by the noble river Rhone, we find one Christian Attalus from Pergamus, and there are other signs of a connection between Gaul and the East. It is difficult to trace out Christian influence, or to set barriers to its diffusion; we, for ourselves, can never tell where our own influence begins or ends.

The number of martyrs at Lyons was a little under fifty: Pothinus, the aged Bishop (he was ninety); Attalus (already mentioned) from Pergamus; Sanctus, a deacon from Vienne, the glorious old Christian town near Lyons; Blandina, a poor slave-girl; Biblias, another slave-girl, who at first, under torture, denied Christ, but afterwards found peace and strength in a renewed confession of Him; Vettius Epagathus, a man of note, who might have

got off had he not chosen to stand with his brethren; Alexander, the physician; and others whose names are written in the Book of Life. As it was at Philippi in the days of Paul, so here at Lyons, we see a little Church made up from very varied lands and social ranks. Yet, diverse as they might be, they all felt that the grace of God was "their general in the battle." Only some ten denied their faith, but even these, in defiance of the law, were executed; and it was noticed that they went sadly and with shame to death, while their braver brethren came forth joyously with glory and much grace upon their brows. They were proud to suffer for the name of Christ, and one of them, Attalus, a Roman citizen, had to bear the placard "I am a Christian," which reminds us of the inscription upon the cross of Christ Himself.

Vile charges of incest and eating infants were brought against them, to which some, under torture, confessed. But Blandina bore to the utmost, and in her agony found strength and refreshment in saying, "I am a Christian," and "We do nothing vile." Pothinus, the Bishop, was buffeted, and, like our own Archbishop Alphege amid the Danes, made a target for aught that could be hurled. And yet even he, with his load of years, was eager for martyrdom; but after two days in the dreadful prison, where some perished by suffocation, he too passed to rest. It was noted, however, that as a rule the young and vigorous, who had not undergone the training of years, bore the strain less easily than the old, who, though weak in body, were strong in faith and experience of God.

At length the strangely-mingled company of brethren were brought out to die together by the beasts in the Circus. "Out of different hues and varied flowers they wove one wreath, and offered it up to the Father."

Even the heathen confessed they had never seen anyone so bravely endure manifold tortures as did Blandina, who was hung on a stake one day as food for the beasts; then, spared, in her innocence, even by them, tossed the next day by bulls. Savage to the very last, and even beyond the grave, the persecutors, departing from the usual Roman reverence for the dead, tossed to the dogs the bodies of those who died in prison, and hoping, as they thought, thus to prevent their resurrection, burnt the bodies of the martyrs and threw their ashes into the Rhone to be borne away.

Thus the martyrs of Lyons and Vienne followed the Lamb. They prayed even for their murderers, as had done their Master and the first of their fellow-martyrs. "Conquerors over all, they departed to God; having loved peace always, and passing on the watchword of peace to those they left behind, they went in peace to God, leaving no grief to their Mother, the Church, no faction or strife to the brethren, but joy and peace and concord and love." The old hill upon which the Roman citadel stood looked down upon the two noble rivers as they carried the ashes of the martyrs to the sea, and it might have beheld their memory streaming out into all Christian lands.

X.

S. POLYCARP.

We have already seen much likeness and many links between New Testament days and the second century. We have looked mainly at the widespread brotherhood of the Church, at its corporate life, joining the brethren together and building them up into one holy temple.

But we must not forget the individual lives, and the nearer ties of kinship, of teacher and pupil, existing within the Great Society. There were links of personal touch leading back from the second century to the Apostles. There were also links between far distant local churches which bound together both scattered lands and different generations. Both these we see in the life of S. Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna in the days of S. Ignatius and in the end a martyr. He was "the most important person in the history of the Christian Church during the ages immediately succeeding the Apostles," as said Bishop Lightfoot; and then he went on to say: "Two long lives—those of S. John and of Polycarp—span the period which elapsed between the personal ministry of our Lord and the great Christian teachers living at the close of the second century. Polycarp was the disciple of S. John, and Irenæus was the disciple of Polycarp." S. Irenæus is fairly well known to us by his writings and by what other writers have told us. He worked in Gaul, S. Polycarp in Asia Minor. Irenæus begins a long line of theological writers. Polycarp takes us back to S. John.

After the destruction of Jerusalem that city had lost much of its importance for Christians. Pella beyond Jordan, the first refuge of Jewish Christians, never became a great centre. It is to Ephesus and the province of which it was the capital that we must look for the continuance of the original type of Apostolic doctrine and practice. Not only were there Christians in Asia, who were, some of them converts of S. Paul, some of S. John, and all of them men of devout life, but their organization was close and efficient. We see the great cities in the Apocalypse, Smyrna, Pergamum (or Pergamus), Ephesus, Sardis, and Philadelphia, to which S. John wrote; all of them

come before us in the second century also. But the disturbed and excited thought, the looseness of life and the coldness of faith in the Seven Churches against which S. John had warned them reappeared later on and brought disaster. Churches, like individuals, have their own good qualities and their own failures and their own temptations. It is well for them to be always on the watch. Only by fervent faith, active well-doing, and constant care can they overcome. The Seven Churches of the Apocalypse all but disappear, they failed to "overcome."

They fell because they did not check evil tendencies inside, and did not take guard against dangers from outside. Ephesus, in the days of S. John, suffered from men who called themselves apostles and were not: Smyrna suffered from the blasphemy of those who called themselves Jews but were a synagogue of Satan. But, if they were faithful unto death, they were promised the crown of life, and this indeed some of them earned. Pergamum, where Satan dwelt, had an early martyr in Antipas, Christ's "witness and faithful one," while Eusebius, two centuries later, mentions the names of others. At Philadelphia, too, there was a synagogue of Satan, of Jews who wished to undo the work of S. Paul and distort the Church. At Thyatira the influence of the prophetess called Jezebel was strong. And most of these churches were in peril from the Nicolaitans, who allowed a looseness of life which made friendliness with a corrupt society very easy.

When we come to the Epistles of S. Ignatius we see that he too found in the same region strange teachings about Christ and bad morals among the Churches. Against such evils he insisted upon a living faith in Christ,

upon the Apostolic teaching, and upon the life of brotherhood with the Church's unity.

In the second century we see more of these Christian communities: Ephesus, the capital of the province, with its free civic life and its famous temple of Diana (Artemis), was also a centre for the worship of the Roman Emperor, and a statue of Augustus was set up in the very precincts of the Artemisium or temple of Diana. This worship was not held hostile to that of local deities, and these twin idolatries worked together against Christianity. A great inscription dating from A.D. 104 tells us that a rich citizen left a large bequest to keep up the worship of Artemis. This is one trace of a revival of heathenism which marked the second century. It is natural to think of the rapid spread of Christianity, but we must also bear in mind this new enthusiasm of heathenism, much like the revival of Mohamedanism in our own days. At the same time the Jews were, as we have already seen, becoming bitterer against the followers of Christ, and in all the great trading cities of Asia there were colonies of Jews. Further, the worship of the Emperor was also spreading, so that the two great rivals, the Empire with its unity and order, the Church with its Gospel and its brotherhood, were growing into apparent opposition. Pergamum, where Satan's throne was, had been the first city to build a temple to Augustus, and was now the great seat of Emperor-worship. Sardis, Ephesus, Smyrna, and Pergamum all had their temples to the Emperor. Thus the triple forces of old Greek heathenism, Jewish enmity, and Roman power were mustering together against the army of the Cross in its worldwide campaign.

XI.

S. POLYCARP'S MARTYRDOM.

In A.D. 155, when the enemies of the Cross were gathering strength, S. Polycarp died a martyr's death, which has been fully told to us.

The Church at Smyrna wrote a letter to the Church of God sojourning at Philomelium and to all the dioceses in every place. Here the original word used is "parishes," for, to begin with, the unit or parish was the diocese inside which our present parishes were formed later on the lines of civil divisions; it is quite true, therefore, historically as well as constitutionally, that the diocese is the unit of the Church. In this letter the Smyrnæans recounted the story of the martyrdom which they thought "came to pass that to them the Lord might once again give an example of the martyrdom which resembles the Gospel story"; there were, indeed, many resemblances, and upon these they laid stress.

There were other martyrs besides S. Polycarp, and these endured until even the bystanders were moved to pity and lamentation, some of the sufferers even letting no cry or groan escape from them. One youth, Germanicus, would receive no compassion, but another, Quintus (a Phrygian lately arrived), after persuading others to come forward as Christians was himself induced to offer incense and take the oath. Their Bishop Polycarp had been persuaded by his flock to withdraw to a little farm not far from the city, and here he spent his time in prayer, and had a dream foretelling his death by fire. His pursuers reached his shelter only to find he had moved to another farm. But a slave-boy under torture con-

fessed his master's new whereabouts, and so the head of the police (by a strange chance called Herod) set out with constables and mounted men "as against a thief" to seize him: they found him lying in an upper room. He at once ordered food and drink for his captors, and then, before he was taken away, he begged their leave to pray, which he did for two hours, remembering all whom he had ever known and all members of the Catholic Church throughout the world.

During his journey, on which he was set upon an ass, his captors urged him to yield, saying, "What harm is there in saying 'Cæsar is Lord,' and in sacrificing?" On his refusal they handled him roughly and bore him to the stadium, which was by now full of tumult. As he entered it a voice sounded, "Be strong, Polycarp, and play the man." The Proconsul urged him to have respect for his great age and to "swear by the genius of Cæsar, to repent and say 'Away with the Atheists,' " as the Christians were called because they did not worship with the multitude. The old man in irony looked around him on the crowd, beckoned with his hand and said "Away with the Atheists." Bidden to swear, to revile Christ, and so gain safety, Polycarp replied, "Eighty and six years have I served Him, and He hath done me no wrong: how then can I blaspheme my King who saved me?" Repeatedly urged, repeatedly he refused, saying plainly he was a Christian. When told he would be destroyed by fire, he spake of the fire of the judgment compared with earthly fire that burnt but for a season. Finally he said, "But for what art thou waiting? Bring what thou wilt"; so the Proconsul bade his crier proclaim thrice, "Polycarp has confessed himself a Christian." Thereupon the multitude, both Gentiles and Jews (whose

share in the martyrdom we thus can see), shouted, "This is the teacher of Asia, the father of all Christians, the destroyer of our God, the man who teaches many not to sacrifice nor even to worship." And they begged Philip the Asiarch (as his official title was) to loose a lion on him. But this he could not do as the games were over. Then they yelled for Polycarp to be burnt alive.

Logs were hurriedly brought, the Jews being specially busy in the work, and the old man undressed, even loosening his shoes, an office which for years his followers in humble love had always done for him. He would not be nailed to the post, for God, he said, would grant him to abide untroubled at the pyre.

Then he offered himself up to God in a beautiful and almost Eucharistic Prayer, using, as he doubtless had been wont to use in his Eucharist itself, the words, "I praise Thee, I bless Thee, I glorify Thee through the everlasting and heavenly High Priest Jesus Christ, Thy beloved Son, through whom to Thee with Him and with the Holy Ghost be glory now and for evermore." When he had said his Amen to this prayer for the Church Militant the fire was kindled, and strangely enough the flames bellied out like a sail and his body burnt not. When "the wicked ones" saw that they could not slay him by fire an executioner was ordered to drive a dagger into him: when he had done so, says a later editor of the letter, adding to the story of the eyewitness, there came out a dove and a stream of blood which put out the fire. So died, says the letter, "the most admirable Polycarp, who in our time was an apostolic and prophetic teacher, Bishop of the Holy Church in Smyrna: for every word which he uttered with his mouth was fulfilled and will be fulfilled."

But malice followed him beyond his death. "Lest the Christians should forsake the Crucified and begin to worship Polycarp," his murderers would not suffer them to carry away his body as was usual. They burnt the corpse, we are told, at the prompting of the Jews, but the Christians gathered up "his bones, more valuable than precious stones and finer than fine gold, and laid them where it was fitting." In that place, should the Lord permit, they hoped to assemble themselves "together in joy and gladness and celebrate the birthday of his martyrdom, alike in memory of them that have fought before and for the training and preparation of them that are to fight hereafter."

And thus we see how there grew up the observance of Saints' days with their vigils, a pledge and a lesson of the Communion of Saints. "Thus it befell the blessed Polycarp: through his patience he overcame and received the crown of incorruption." "Rejoicing with Apostles and all just men, he glorifies our Almighty God and Father and blesses our Lord Jesus Christ, Saviour of our souls, and Helmsman of our bodies, Shepherd of the Catholic Church throughout the world."

XII.

S. PERPETUA.

Deaths of martyrs made the deepest impression on both the Church and the world. They gave a sudden and unexpected revelation, as by a flash of lightning, of the secret power of the Christian faith. Witnesses from S. Paul to Tertullian in the second century were drawn first by wonder to inquiry and then by

imitation to salvation. Thus even among the heathen everywhere S. Polycarp, we are told, was spoken of as an illustrious teacher and a conspicuous martyr. But among all the stories of these deeds and deaths none is more beautiful or told in simpler way than that of S. Perpetua and her fellows at Carthage in the year A.D. 203.

The Passion of S. Perpetua was perhaps put together by no less a master of prose than Tertullian himself, who indeed also wrote an Address to Martyrs, which, together with the Letters of S. Ignatius may well have become a handbook for those called to suffer and therefore eager to prepare for the end. But the story is mainly given in the supposed (possibly the real) words of Perpetua herself. At Carthage "Revocatus and Felicitas her fellow-slave, Saturninus and Secundulus were arrested, and, along with them, Vibia Perpetua, of excellent family and education, a wife and a mother. She had father and mother and two brothers, one of whom was a catechumen, and an infant son at the breast. In age she was about two and twenty."

Great as were the troubles of her prison, her greatest trouble was, perhaps, the insistence of her father, as he sought to break down her faith through his affection for her. But her firmness soon angered him and then for a few days he kept away from her, and in that interval she was baptized, although she knew she could only expect from her baptism sufferings of the flesh. Her father's absence was, she says, a refreshment to her. Soon she was placed in the prison and shuddered because she had never felt such gloom: the fearful heat arising from the crowd, the jostling of the soldiers, and above all anxiety for her infant, made the agony worse. "The blessed deacons, who were ministering to them," were

able by bribery to gain the prisoners a few hours' leave, and thus she could see her mother and brother, could comfort them, and above all could nourish her babe. In many of these cases of imprisonment we are told in the same way how the Church through the deacons cared for its confessors, and the kindness as well as the venality of the gaolers is to be seen. Perpetua found her child weak and pining, but after some days she was allowed to have the babe in prison with her, and, so she says, "my prison suddenly became to me a palace, so that I had rather be there than anywhere else."

Her simple story then goes on to tell a number of visions which, like the visions of the Bible, strengthened their faith and also cast their light ahead. We need not puzzle ourselves as to how far these visions were the outcome of the sufferers' mind or how far they were specially sent from above. But we may notice that in North Africa, as elsewhere, Montanism had by this time gained strength, and the Montanists laid claim to special revelations; indeed they went so far as to see in ecstasy a special proof of Christian power, much as centuries later did the earlier Wesleyans, the Irvingites, and various Revivalists. Tertullian himself (as we shall see) became a Montanist, and so some have seen in the *Passion of S. Perpetua* a Montanist document. In any case, however, we must take it as it stands, a record of simple faith, and of the weak made strong. Criticism cannot spoil for us its beauty and its pathos.

In the first dream which came to her after prayer she saw a brazen ladder, narrow but of size so wondrous as to reach to heaven; all kinds of weapons, swords, lances, hooks, and daggers, were fixed in it to tear the flesh of any careless one going up, and a dragon guarded its foot.

Her comrade Saturus, who went up first, warned her to beware of the dreadful beast, but she answered, "In the name of Jesus Christ he shall not hurt me." And the dragon in fear turned his head away so that she trod upon it as she went up. At the top she saw a large garden and in the midst of it a man with white hair, in the garb of a shepherd and milking his sheep. He said to her, "Welcome, child," and gave her a morsel of the cheese he was making, which she received with hands joined together and ate. All the white-robed host who stood around said "Amen," and at that word she woke, but still kept the taste of something sweet. By this vision they understood that death was to be her doom.

But her father was still her trouble: alone of her kindred he could not rejoice at her martyrdom and appealed to her, "Pity my grey hairs; do not disgrace me": at her trial he held her infant child and prayed her, "Pity thy child." But she was firm and refused to sacrifice to the Emperor, although her father kept urging her until the procurator ordered him to be beaten with a rod. And she felt it as though she had been struck herself, so sorry was she for his miserable old age. At last they were condemned to the beasts, and went joyfully down to the prison. Afterwards, moreover, they had further visions, of heaven with its angels and its throne, upon which sat an old man, with snowy hair but youthful face. He wiped away the tears from their faces, and Perpetua said that however happy she had been in the flesh she was happier there. Outside the wonderful palace they met the local Bishop and presbyter, separate and sad, who because the martyrs had left their flock begged them all now to be at one. They made peace and embraced, so that the factions and differences of earth were ended.

Among the prisoners was a poor slave, Felicitas, who in the prison itself gave birth to a child. When the little company of martyrs passed to the amphitheatre as if in heaven, joyful and trembling, if tremble they did, with joy, not fear, Perpetua moved "with bright step as a bride of Christ and the darling of God, her eyes flashing so as to quell the staring mob." Then came Felicitas, and in the whole of these Acts or histories of saints no picture is more beautiful than that of these two tender girls, one of noble birth and one a slave, standing hand in hand after the beasts had tossed them. In Christ and in Christian Faith there was neither bond nor free. After the agony of the beasts they came to receive the final thrust of death, but not before they had given each other the holy kiss so as to fulfil the martyrdom by the solemn rite of peace.

When they had come to the gate of the amphitheatre they had been ordered to put on robes, the men those of priests of Saturn and the women those of servants of Ceres. But Perpetua led them all in refusing to submit to this disgrace and injustice. Even the unjust saw their protest was just. They were let go to death, dressed as they were, and Perpetua sang a psalm. Through the whole scene, part of the struggle between the spirit of heaven and the sin of earth, it is she who in the strength of her weakness and the firmness of her faith was the leader of the band. It was fitting that among the glorious mosaics at Ravenna in the Archbishop's Palace the art of the East should celebrate on Italian soil these martyrs of the West. Two of the most beautiful are those of S. Perpetua and S. Felicitas, joined in memory as they were in martyrdom.

The story of the Passion ends: "O most brave and

blessed martyrs ! O truly called and elect for the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ !” And it bids us read for the edification of the Church these examples, as wonderful as were the older ones of the Apostles, “so that new powers may testify that one and the ever same Holy Spirit is still working.” Owing the truth of this for ourselves we too can join in its Gloria and its Amen.

XIII.

GNOSTICISM.

When a child grows up and passes from the shelter of his peaceful home into the turbulent world he feels the change of all around him; the customs and thoughts he knew are replaced by others, just as the friendly faces of those he knew are replaced by those of strangers. The changes without him are often bound up with changes within him, and it is well if he can keep to the guidance of the rules he has learnt and the habits he has formed. It was something the same with the Church. It had received the revelation of Christ, it had the commandments of God, and it had the inspiration and guidance of the Holy Spirit. These were bound up in the teaching of the Apostles, they were learnt by life within the Church; they were nourished by the Sacraments and kept alive by worship and by prayer. To a man strengthened in this way it might seem easy to think as a Christian should and to live as Christians ought. But the Church and its members had to reckon with the world without, and this brought difficulties, chances of errors, as well as opportunities of usefulness and strength. The world may mould us on the one hand if on the other we may change the world itself.

Already in the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistles we see the Christian Faith confronted by schemes of thought opposed to it. The Jewish outlook differed from that of Christians; so did that of the philosophers whom S. Paul met at Athens; so did that of the semi-magical leaders such as Simon Magus; and again in the Apocalypse and Colossians we have hints of kinds of thought loosely akin to the Oriental heresies of later days. In all these various schools of thought Christianity might find points of contact with itself; it might more easily find points of disagreement. As the Church reached into remoter lands it was only to be expected that it should encounter fresh kinds of thought of varying value. It might oppose them to the uttermost: it might compromise with them: it could not ignore them.

Many of these kinds of thought or belief which differed greatly among themselves are roughly classed together as Gnosticism. Some of their leaders were interested in Christianity and had been affected by it; so between Christianity and these rival schemes there was as it were a debatable ground covered by thinkers who claimed to be Christians but were not so at heart.

Greek Philosophy had reached its height in Plato, and the Neo-Platonists, as a later school of his followers were called, had kept something of his excellence. They believed in a god who, in his wish to reveal himself to men, threw off spiritual emanations, thus getting nearer and nearer to men. Christ, if He were not regarded as God, could easily be reckoned one such emanation, the highest of created beings. But this could not be Christianity, although it might play with the name of Christ. Then there were the Syrian and the Egyptian wings of

these philosophic skirmishers, who seized upon the mystery religions with their attempt to bring about a union between God and the searcher after Him by means of strange rites of initiation.

One great riddle of the universe in particular gave rise to many strange systems of religious philosophy. How was the supremacy of a good God to be reconciled with the existence of evil in the world He was supposed to have created? Some answered that mind was good and matter evil, and that while the two were mingled in man and in the world there must always be antagonism between them. Others answered that by a long series of emanations ("genealogies") from the Supreme God we reached at last to a spirit retaining enough of Divine power to create but having lost enough of it to delight in creating a world largely evil. With such beliefs Christianity could not agree: yet on the other side it had sympathy with the real spiritual yearning that some of these thinkers felt: it might possibly find grains of truth in their rubbish-heap of dross.

But the Gnostics took to adapting to their own schemes both the Old Testament and the Gospel. The Creator, the God of the Jews, was, they said, imperfect and so not the Supreme God. But the Supreme God Whom man could never know had revealed Himself in Jesus Christ, who, because He was sinless, could not have had a material body, so that He could not have really lived or died upon the Cross. Hence there could be no Redemption in the Christian sense. Such thinkers could not be expected to like the Gospels or all the Epistles. Hence they cut out part of the Gospels and rejected whole Epistles. The entire teaching of our Lord it was impossible for them to accept. They had to explain it away. They claimed,

moreover, to have a superior knowledge (or Gnosis), which had been handed from Christ and had so reached to them. To support it they brought forward apocryphal gospels of their own. This was superior in their eyes to the Apostolic tradition. In the second century Gnosticism reached its height, and was for Christianity a danger of the first rank. Both those of its teachers who were philosophers, and those who were merely foolish vapourers much like the Christian Science teachers of to-day, attracted converts, and in two quite opposite ways the Gnostics affected conduct as well as belief. Some of them were ascetic, because they thought all matter evil: others of them taught that licentiousness was allowable, since matter and its deeds could not soil the soul.

The Church of the second century could rightly, then, hold Gnosticism to be its great enemy and its great danger. Faced by the Gnostics, it was driven back upon its own strength, or rather upon the Divine strength which sustained it. It asserted, as its answer, the authority of its Scriptures; the soundness of the Apostolic teaching which had come down to it and was summed up in its growing creeds; it laid new stress upon the Church and its guardianship of truth in doctrine. Its own historic existence was a complete answer to the Gnostic claim of an inner teaching, handed down by a Gnostic successor apart from the Church. Its power was greater than it knew. Within the Church was to be found "the truth as it is in Jesus": its ministry, with its hold upon the past, reaching back to the real historic Jesus, at once God and Man, were the guarantees that it taught what He had revealed and that it administered His means of Grace. This was the Church's answer to the peril that pressed upon it but was soon to pass away.

But it is easy to see, without going into details, how difficult and many-sided this danger was. It claimed to be theology, it claimed to be philosophy: it seemed to possess breadth of vision and to answer fashionable questions. The Church, with its revelation of God and its ordered life, is always influenced by thought without it. If it refuses to have any dealings with it, it becomes isolated and also loses its hold upon the world. It can, on the other hand, approach such thought and such thinkers with sympathy and be ready to see what there is of truth or goodness in them and their systems. But in doing so it must above all else hold firmly and clearly the Revelation of God in Christ, and its own rules of worship and life. Outside systems of thought, such as indeed we see to-day, are only too likely to lower our conception of Christ's Person and our hold upon Him: they are only too likely to make us lay too little stress upon Christian life. It was so with the Church of the second century.

XIV

S. IRENÆUS.

We have already seen that Irenæus had been a pupil of S. Polycarp, his memories of whom he had written down. He had seen him at Smyrna, but he had been also at Rome when Polycarp had discussed with Anicetus the keeping of Easter (A.D. 156). At Rome, too, he seems to have taught, but it is with the great city of Lyons that he is mainly connected. The martyrs there, of whom we have already spoken, before their condemnation, sent letters round to other Churches, and the letter for Rome

was carried (A.D. 177) by Irenæus, whom they commended as a priest of their city. Soon afterwards he appears as Bishop there, and this is the first entry into theology of the great Gallican Church which has had such a splendid history of its own.

S. Irenæus was always a peacemaker, just as was his great Gallican successor, S. Hilary of Poitiers, in the days of S. Athanasius. When Victor, Bishop of Rome, was trying to cast out of the Church those who, like the Eastern Christians, kept Easter at the Passover, whether it were a Sunday or not, he tried to keep clear of strife this very difference in observing the day, which after all, he said, "confirms our concord in the faith." He showed himself as a man of broad charity, and so commends the firmness with which he kept to the Apostolic faith as it had come down to him.

But it was the place of Christian teaching in the widespread chaos of conflicting theories which filled this great teacher with alarm. A little later Tertullian, in Africa, wrote of Gnosticism: "Away with all attempts to produce a motley Christianity, compounded of Stoicism, Platonism, and Dialectics. Possessing Jesus Christ, we need no curious disputation; after enjoying the Gospel, we require no philosophical inquiries." So, too, thought S. Irenæus, and accordingly he wrote "The Refutation of the Heresies," in the latter part of which he sets out the Christian teaching.

It is important to notice that he speaks often of the rule of faith (*regula fidei*), which answers substantially to our later Creeds, and from his great work these could not only be supported, but almost reconstructed. He speaks of the Christian "who is loyal and steadfast to the rule of truth which he received at his Baptism." And

in many places he gives this Apostolic Rule of Faith, sometimes shortly and sometimes more fully; for instance: "The Church, although scattered over the face of the whole world, received from the Apostles and their disciples the faith in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, the seas and all that in them is, and in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who became incarnate for our salvation, and in the Holy Ghost, who by the Prophets proclaimed the dispensations, and the Advents, and the Virgin Birth, and the Passion, and the Resurrection from the dead, and the bodily ascension into heaven of our beloved Lord Christ Jesus, and His Advent from the heaven in the glory of the Father to sum up all things in Himself and to raise the flesh of all mankind."

Of this faith he writes: "The Churches set up in Germany have never believed otherwise, nor do they now hand on anything different; Spain, similarly, those in Gaul, and throughout the East and in Egypt, in Libya and in the middle regions of the world. But as the sun, the creation of God, is one and the same in all the world, so also the preaching of the Truth shines everywhere and enlightens all who wish to come to the knowledge of the Truth." The varieties of expressions stand, he says, to the one faith just as the many dialects to a common language. By this comparison he illustrates, what we shall have to notice again, the varying forms of the Baptismal Creeds along with the unity of their doctrine. And, as we might expect from the early date and the Eastern connections of S. Irenæus, the type of creed best known to him seems to have been Eastern rather than Western, akin to the fuller and more doctrinal Nicene Creed of our Prayer-Book, which is Eastern, rather than

to the simpler historic form of the Apostles' Creed, which is Western.

It is clear that the various Churches in different places already used forms of words for Confessions at Baptism which were all founded upon the Scriptures, and although differing slightly in phrase and form, are represented by the great Creeds, the Apostles' and the Nicene; later on these became general, and were accepted everywhere. It is well to remember this, lest we should accept the statement sometimes made that our Christian Creeds only stand for the thoughts and opinions of later ages, and not for the original and simple Apostolic teaching. It will, furthermore, help us, if we wish to follow Christ and His Apostles, to keep, even in these days of confused thoughts and compromise, the Rule of Faith. For us, as for the Early Church, to do so is necessary for safety as well as for clearness of thought.

Nothing is more remarkable than the way in which, in face of Gnosticism, Irenæus sets out the Incarnation of Christ as the foundation of Christian belief and life. Here he follows S. John and S. Paul, but the very controversies of his day helped him, as our controversies and discussions can help us if we use them properly, to see more clearly its many sides and its importance for ourselves. It is to the historic facts of the Gospels that he appeals, and it is specially to be noticed that he sets forth the Virgin Birth of our Lord as an undoubted fact. This, indeed, he might well do, since even almost all the early heretics accepted it without demur. For it is not the case, as we sometimes hear it said, that Christian teachers gradually gave this article of the Creed an increasing prominence in order to safeguard and enhance the Incarnation. On the contrary, it is put forward even more prominently in

the second century than it is in later ages. It is thus an earlier and Apostolic Rule of Faith, no mere creation of his own time and day, that Irenæus discusses with learning and conviction. He appeals to the Apostles.

XV.

S. IRENÆUS AND THE WITNESS OF THE CHURCH.

S. Irenæus is thus an accurate and early witness for our Christian faith, and the historic Creed in which it was embodied. But the Christian faith is inherited by and preserved within the Christian Church and through the Christian life. The Church's continued existence is a guarantee of its inherited and enlarging faith. So he appeals against the current speculations, which were at once both interesting and dangerous, to the known facts of the Church in his day, and to its earlier history, which all men knew and which could not be questioned. In the great centres of life, the cities of commanding place, Christianity had long been taught and the Church had long been organized. Apostles in some cases, evangelists in others, had taught to begin with, and generation after generation had inherited their teaching. So the great city Churches, with their lines of Bishops and their flocks of believers, had been founded, and on the living foundation of Christ and His Apostles the living temple had afterwards grown. To the testimony of these great centres of Christian teaching, the great missionary Churches placed as lights upon a hill, S. Irenæus appealed.

“The tradition of the Apostles, made manifest in all the world, may be seen in every Church by all who wish to know; and we are able to enumerate those who were

appointed by the Apostles to be Bishops in the Churches and their successors down to our own days. . . . But since it were a long matter to enumerate the successions of all the Churches, we will point to one Church, very great, very ancient, and known to all, the Church founded and established in Rome by two most glorious Apostles, Peter and Paul, a Church whose tradition is from the Apostles, and whose faith has been announced to men reaching down to our own days through the successions of the Bishops. . . . For to this Church [*i.e.*, that of Rome], on account of its *superior pre-eminence*, it must needs be that every Church—that is, the faithful from all sides—*should come together*; and in this Church the tradition of the Apostles has been always preserved by men from all parts.”

These are the words of S. Irenæus. Two of the expressions used (those in italics) have, in the light of Roman claims and later controversies, caused much discussion, but the translations of them given here are those which, apart from prejudices, best claim support. But we quote the words here in reference to the second century and its past, not to the then future medieval or modern times with their controversies. It is clear that S. Irenæus did recognize a body of Christian teaching handed down from the days of the Apostles, preserved with jealous care, and to be held in preference to any later teachings or interpretations. He was for the moment mainly concerned with stating this against the Gnostics, who were giving wild and distorted accounts of Christian belief and Christian history, even tampering with the Christian Scriptures. In the great Churches, among which as a striking example he instanced Rome, with its graves of the Apostles, there could be found a continuity

of teaching, a tradition which was testified to by the extant lists of Bishops covering the days down to the Apostles. To the great cities, and especially to Rome, there came Christian visitors from all parts (here we think of the Acts and the Epistles), and these Christians, knowing what was taught in their own Churches, would have detected at once any difference between that and what was taught at Rome. Hence this close touch between the great Churches and all others kept the faith more closely to the Apostolic teaching. The Churches were witnesses for Christian Truth, and it was the special duty of the Bishops everywhere "with all faithful diligence to banish and drive away all erroneous and strange doctrine contrary to God's Word," as it is put in the Consecration of Bishops in our Prayer-Book. To this testimony of local Churches about the Apostolic teaching, kept fresh and living by intercourse with Churches elsewhere, S. Irenæus appeals. It is thus he would gather up the teaching of the "Catholic" Church, to use a term then becoming general. It was thus, some hundred and fifty years later, that the Bishops assembled in Council at Nicæa (A.D. 325) testified to the teaching preserved in their own Churches, and drew up a common Creed in harmony with the united testimony.

Isolated Churches, like isolated individuals, are apt to fall into strange fancies and do strange things, as some of the Celtic Christians did in later days. The touch of our brethren, that unity which is strength, is a ready help in time of need. To draw closer to Christ, to cherish the teaching of the Apostles He sent, is a help even greater and more inspiring. For it is thus, and through the life and training of the Church, through its history as well as through its present voice, that the Spirit of God is with us and in us.

XVI.

LINKS WITH THE PAST.

It is always interesting to note links with the past, and the second century wisely treasured anything that carried us back to the Apostles. S. Polycarp was such a link in himself. He had been brought up as a believer from childhood: he had met S. Ignatius and received a letter from him: he had written to the Philadelphian Christians asking for news of the great martyr, and this epistle is alive with New Testament references and reminiscences. Towards the end of his life he visited Rome, and discussed with the Bishop Anicetus the proper time of keeping Easter: Asiatic Christians kept it on the day of the Passover whether it were a Sunday or not: most Christians kept it, as we do now, always on a Sunday. But this difference of usage did not break charity as it was to do by the strictness of another Roman Bishop, forty years later. Polycarp returned home soon to die, but even at Rome he had won some from error by his account of Apostolic teaching. S. Irenæus, who had sat at his feet in Asia, says of him: "I can describe the very place in which the blessed Polycarp used to sit when he discoursed, and his goings out and his comings in, and his manner of life, and his personal appearance, and the discourses which he gave before the people, and how he would describe his intercourse with John and with the rest who had seen the Lord, and how he would relate their words. And whatsoever things he had heard from them about the Lord, and about his miracles, and about his teaching, Polycarp, as having received them from eyewitnesses of the

life of the Word, would relate them in accordance with the Scriptures. To these discourses I used to listen at the time with attention by God's mercy which was given to me, noting them down, not on paper, but in my heart: and by the grace of God I constantly meditate upon them faithfully." For he points out that he could "distinctly remember the incidents of that time better than things of late occurrence, for the lessons received in childhood, growing with the growth of the soul, become identified with it." These memories he used as an appeal to his friend Florinus, who had fallen into heresy about Christ although he too had known Polycarp.

Polycarp was thus rooted in the faith and in the Scriptures: we can see in him how memories carefully handed down were treasured along with the New Testament writings. He was also and above all a man of prayer: thus, when the officers came to seize him for trial he asked leave to pray and for the space of two hours prayed with such fulness of grace as to make even his captors repent their task of seizing such a saint. In this way Christianity was moulding men for the trials they had to face and the work they had to do.

Among the Apologists we meet Tatian, a Syrian born in Assyria, and, like Justin, a traveller and a philosopher, who illustrates the way in which men were reaching towards the past. He was, moreover, a pupil of Justin, but, unlike him, escaped martyrdom, and indeed became a Gnostic about A.D. 172. In other ways, too, he differs from his master, for he treats his opponents, the Greeks, against whom he writes, with abuse and contempt. But his name will always be remembered in Christian history for his "Diatessaron," or harmony of our Lord's life,

compiled, with some insertions, from the four Gospels. This was a work of wide circulation, and its recovery is one of the triumphs of modern scholarship. If Christian thought, among many temptations and amid much ferment, kept to the Apostolic tradition, it was able to do this because it possessed the Gospels, and indeed the New Testament at large.

Tatian's account of his conversion shows how educated and observant men were drifting towards Christianity. He had seen for himself the weaknesses and faults of heathen thought, society, and religion. He says (chap. xxix., "Address to the Greeks"): "Wherefore, having seen these things, and, moreover, also having been admitted to the mysteries, and having everywhere examined the religious rites . . . retiring by myself, I sought how I might be able to discover the truth. And while I was thus giving my most earnest attention to the matter, I happened to meet with certain barbaric (*i.e.*, not Greek) writings, too old to be compared with the opinions of the Greeks, and too divine to be compared with their errors; and I was led to put faith in these by the unpretending cast of the language, the inartificial character of the writers, the foreknowledge displayed of future events, the excellent quality of the precepts, and the declaration of the government of the universe as centred in one Being." In this way, by the power and charm of the Old Testament, for its books are the old writings of which he speaks, his soul was "taught of God," and he turned to Christianity. Thus "initiated and instructed in these things," he "put away his former errors as the follies of childhood." We often speak of the Jewish dispensation as preparing the way for Christianity; here we see in Tatian's story, how not only in the world at large, before

Christ came, but also while Christianity was being preached, the Law was often to men one by one a school-master leading them to Christ.

XVII.

THE APOLOGISTS.—I.

As the Church found more and more the need of explaining its faith to those outside it, and at the same time felt the injustice of its treatment by the State, a new school of Christian writers arose. These were the Apologists, or defenders of Christianity. They attempted, on the one hand, an explanation to those outside of what the Christian religion was in a way they could understand and would approve; on the other hand, they attempted to show those in civil authority that the Christian Church was not disorderly or rebellious. There were heathen writers and teachers who attacked the Church; there were rulers and magistrates who persecuted it. Against both of these Christianity was now put to its defence, and this was the task its Apologists (or defenders) now undertook. We must remember that an apology really means a defence, not an excuse or confession of wrongdoing, although in popular use it now means a plea for pardon. There was not the slightest intention of explaining their belief away; there was no feeling of shyness or shame for what they held.

Some of the Apologists were men of great intellectual power. It is a mistake to speak even of the first generation of Christians, and of the Apostles themselves, as poor men, low in the social scale, lacking in education or mental power. It was true in the first and second

centuries, as it is now, that Christianity has its message and its power for rich and poor alike, for the educated and the ignorant, for the clever and for the simple. Then, as now, to the poor in all ways the Gospel was preached, as it should be; then, as now, it had to be preached also to those who were rich either in this world's gifts or in mental power. It is perhaps easier to attract the poor or simple, and it is certainly easier to measure the results of work among them. But the Church can never neglect for long any side of its work; it can never stand aloof from any class or take sides with any class, although to do so may sometimes give it an easy triumph. Had the early Christians been content to hold their faith merely as a religion for the poor or the oppressed there would have been little Christianity in the world to-day. Had they, again, held it to be merely a religion for the simple, although it is true that every Christian must be a child at heart, and cultivate the virtues which mark the poor, Christianity would have lost its hold upon philosophy and been degraded into a superstition. It is for Christians in every age to see that their Christianity embraces every class; it is for them to keep up the brotherhood between Christianity and the higher forms of education, as well as between it and the lower. It is for Christianity to sanctify the intellect as it is for it to hallow Art. The standpoint of the Puritan as he looks at Art; the view of learning taken by the narrowest monasticism of the Egyptian desert, or of Europe in the tenth century—any of these should be impossible for a Christian at any time. Even if the faith of an individual might survive after he had become rooted on such a footing, he would himself suffer loss; and if we could imagine the Church generally taking either of these standpoints, it too

would suffer loss. It might even become sick unto death.

If the Church, then, treasures among its memories the thousands of poor and of simple who have striven in saintliness, it can equally remember the dedicated gifts of an Origen, an Augustine, a Thomas Aquinas, a Hooker, a Pascal, or, to take an example in later days, of the many great Cambridge mathematicians who were also men of simple faith. There have been many such men passing in a long line through all the ages. In this matter, as in others, Church history is a tonic for the feeble-hearted, who are inclined to fear that the Cross is losing its empire over the powers of the mind or the richer growths of human skill. There may sometimes seem to-day, as there has seemed in the past, to be a chance of such a disaster. But a new century or a new generation, a new school of thought or a new glory of Christian art arises; the danger passes, and the Church renews its strength. Because of its life in Christ the gates of death cannot prevail against it. It is well to remember this in our own days and times; it is a lesson taught us by the second century. Christ is the Truth just as He is the Life.

But what is true of the Church at large in its own sphere is also true of every Christian in his own smaller sphere. Because he is Christian he must care for his body and its health, and (what we are specially concerned with now) he must equally care for his mind with its varied interests and powers. He must make himself able and strong for God in mind as well as in body and in soul. An ignorant Christian who has never had a chance of passing out of his ignorance may have some excuse; a Christian who remains content with his ignorance is slighting God and maiming himself.

When the Church laid hold, as it did in the second century, of thinkers and writers and teachers, of men with great powers of mind, it was almost unconsciously preparing for a conquest of the world, of its thought, and of its politics. It was the Christianity of such men which made possible the after achievements of an Athanasius and an Augustine, and which in another field laid the foundations of the Christian Empire. Interesting as the Apologists are in themselves and their works, great as is the light they throw upon Christian thought, and incidentally on Christian life and worship, we must never forget their place in the majestic march of the Church to its triumph over the world.

XVIII.

THE APOLOGISTS.—II.

The Apologists undertook to explain for all the attraction of their religion, with its worship, its morality, and its life of fellowship. As we read their pages we must remember that behind them lies the power of Jesus and the secret fire of the Church's life. First among them comes Quadratus, himself a missionary, who wrote because some were "troubling the brethren." That he could present his work to Hadrian shows how Christianity was growing. Aristides, who wrote under and for Antoninus Pius, was a philosopher of Athens, the great University town of the Empire. His Apology has a history which is one of the many romantic stories of research and recovery. After part of it had been discovered in an Armenian translation, the whole was found in Syria, and then it turned out that it had long

been embedded in a romance which had come down through the Middle Ages. In this writing he discusses, as a philosopher might for a simple audience, the ideas of God held by heathen, Jews, and Christians; it is not difficult for him to show that the last had the most excellent doctrine, able to inspire higher morals and a warmer charity.

Justin Martyr, who also wrote about A.D. 152 for Antoninus, like Aristides, was a philosopher, and as a Christian he kept the short cloak which was the philosopher's distinction mark. Born in Samaria, at Neapolis (now Nablus, near the ancient Sichem), he roamed the world in search of knowledge, and studied Platonic philosophy. This life he would have followed to the end had he not been led by some martyrdoms which he beheld to seek behind the death (and indeed the life) of Christians the secret power which inspired them.

Justin was in Rome about A.D. 152, when he wrote his Apologies, and he had studied the task before him very thoroughly. Much as a lecturer upon Christian evidences to-day goes about listening to his opponents in the parks and talks freely with those he meets, or, again, as Bishop Pecocke delighted to hear for himself the views of Lollards, so that he could answer them in English with an intelligent knowledge of their minds; so in his day did Justin. He was always to be found in public places, sometimes merely talking, sometimes making speeches. Indeed, his conversion was partly due to these street conversations, although partly, as we said, due to the sight of martyrdoms. At Ephesus (about A.D. 133) he had come across one Trypho, a Jew, and had with him a dialogue (afterwards published) on Judaism and Christianity. Then, as now, the need for work among the Jews was great, and Justin,

who understood the spiritual grandeur of the Old Testament, was well able to discharge in this way the debt of Christians to Jews. Here again his life reminds us of our own days, and the calls of this very work, sometimes neglected, upon ourselves.

It was, indeed, his activity in street controversy that led to Justin's martyrdom. He came across a philosopher, Crescens, who was specially given to attacking Christians, and Justin, never afraid of a conflict, got the better of him in a debate which was taken down in writing. Some twelve or thirteen years later Justin was again in Rome, and gathered around him in his lodgings on the Viminal a group of scholars. Along with half a dozen of these he was arrested (about A.D. 165), and tried before the Prefect of the city. They were bidden to "obey the gods, and do what the Emperors command." All refused to sacrifice to the gods, and all were executed. At his trial Justin stated his doctrine, confessing himself a Christian, and it is worthy of note that the magistrate, himself a man of reading, who had lent Marcus Aurelius a copy of Epictetus, understood clearly what Christianity was and implied. The knowledge of it had spread at Rome since the days of Nero.

Thus from Justin's life we can see, not only some ways in which Christianity was spreading, but how Christian theology grew. It was needful, in a world of Jews and pagans, of philosophers, inquirers, and doubters, to define for oneself and for others the Articles of Belief. If the Christian Creed in its present forms grew up from the needs of Baptism and instruction inside the Church, Christian theology in a fuller form grew up from the needs of missionary work and of controversy.

XIX.

THE EMPERORS IN THE SECOND CENTURY.

Something should be said of the time in which the Apologists lived, the historic setting of their lives and works. The first two Emperors of the Flavian line, Vespasian and Titus, had been great Generals, and became great rulers. The third of the line, Domitian, although he had his moments of good government, was hated by many, and not least by the Christians whom he persecuted. He was killed by conspirators in A.D. 96, and so one, who in disposition and character reminds us of the despots of the Italian Renaissance, perished as did some of them. He had shown the world what despotism could be, and the caprice of a mind spoilt by power was not atoned for by his strict administration, which kept the provinces in peace. Christians had learnt to dread the personal hatred of an Emperor; Nero, Antichrist as they held him to be, had passed away, although many looked for his return to earth as an enemy of the Body of Christ. Domitian's short burst of fury against the Christians, although it might only wreak itself at Rome, had placed him—for Christians, at any rate—among the evil Emperors. With him ended the Flavian line, and after Nerva had reigned just long enough to stop persecution, he left the throne to Trajan, great as a General and as a ruler, diligent and just.

A story told in later centuries of S. Gregory the Great reveals to us what later Christians thought of Trajan, and in simplicity and interest it matches another story of S. Gregory, that of the English slaves in the Roman market-place. Gregory was passing through the Forum

of Trajan, and asked the meaning of a carving he saw there. Its supposed story was told him. A desolate widow pleaded to the Emperor for justice upon some soldiers who had murdered her only son. He promised her justice when he came back from the campaign upon which he was setting out. "Yea, lord," said the supplicant; "but if thou dost not come back there will be none to do me right." Trajan at once made the criminals atone. S. Gregory, in the missionary zeal of his great heart which beat for us in England too, felt pity that so noble an Emperor had not known Christ, and prayed for his worthy soul at S. Peter's grave. It was revealed to him that his prayer had availed for Trajan's soul, but that never again ought he so to pray for one who had lived and died unbaptized.

There were doubtless Christians before the time of the chronicler of this tale who had admired and approved the best of the Emperors as they had condemned the worst. Trajan had shown himself just (although no more than just) when Pliny had appealed for his judgment upon the Christians. He had saved them, at any rate, from anonymous informers. But for the persistence of Christians, wrecking the public peace with their superstition and prejudice, he felt no pity and he showed no mercy. They must perish as they deserved. This is the view really taken of our religion even to-day by many who would hardly care to put it into words. The politician, who looks to politics to save the world, if indeed he rises to such general ideals at all; the man of common sense, who takes the decision of majorities as peculiarly sane and quite decisive—both of these often wax impatient with Christianity, with the peculiar principles and peculiar conduct it impresses upon its disciples. It is well, on the

other hand, that Christians, tempted to be easygoing themselves in a world which is easygoing so long it is not disturbed or thwarted, should be reminded how essential these principles and peculiarities are to their religion. The Church, and notably the Apologists, asked the world for justice when the Church was suffering; yet undoubtedly the moral disposition and the missionary spirit of the Church, when it had to beg this favour, were higher than they were later on when, after Constantine, the Church was favoured, petted instead of persecuted. Prosperity is often more dangerous to the souls of men than hardship and days of stress.

XX.

THE AGE OF THE ANTONINES.

The second century may be called the golden age of the Empire so far as the personalities of the Emperors are concerned. The Emperor Hadrian (117-138) had followed Trajan, and his character, quite unlike that of earlier Emperors, and also quite unlike the Antonines, marks a stage of transition. He was an able soldier; he was also a man of letters, a traveller, at home anywhere in the world and its society. He had covered in his travels the whole of the Empire, and his outlook upon its wide field was interested but cynical and superficial, much like that of Horace Walpole and Georgian diarists. The Christians he looked upon with cool amusement, and in Egypt he found little difference between them and the worshippers of Serapis. The Egyptians, he said, were altogether frivolous, unstable, and shifting with every breath of rumour. There was no ruler of the Jewish synagogue, no Samaritan, no Christian priest who was not astrologer,

soothsayer, or apothecary. Their one god was money, which Christians, Jews, and Gentiles all adored. This judgment of his may or may not have been true, but his tone of ridicule hides some knowledge and some tolerance of the sect formerly despised. It is clear that the State was slowly changing its attitude towards the Christians. Antoninus Pius (A.D. 138-161) was conscientious and dutiful; he respected the constitution, and was amiable both in private and public life. From a ruler both sensible and kindly Christians might well expect toleration, and so naturally Apologists made appeals to him. Yet it was under Antoninus that Polycarp was martyred, and there were other persecutions as well.

Marcus Aurelius (A.D. 161-180) is perhaps the best known of the Emperors, and one whose character stands the highest. His "Meditations" reveal a man of simple but literary and philosophic tastes, highly moral, but somewhat self-conscious. It might have been expected that such a man would have welcomed the Christian ideal, but yet we find him even more of a persecutor than had been his immediate predecessors. He never understood Christianity; he looked upon it as something which stood in the way of the Empire and of calm philosophy alike. His son and successor, Commodus, a bad man and a bad ruler, on the other hand, left the Christians alone.

We have to ask ourselves why it was that the good Emperors were often persecutors and the bad Emperors were not always so. One answer is that the Roman State and the Christian Church had different ideals, and yet were each of them trying to unite the world and raise mankind in different ways. The exclusive devotion of Christians to their God, which marked them out as peculiar, seemed an insult to the State. Neither states-

man nor philosopher nor mob cared for those who would not go along with them, and go on their terms. We have lived so long under a State which has inherited much of Christian thought and morality that we forget there is no necessary sympathy between the methods of the State and the methods of the Church. A State which is not Christian need not and may not pay regard to the good morality and the peaceful character of Christians. It may refuse them justice. It was so with the Roman Empire.

And, again, the Roman Empire and the Christian Church were slowly moving towards a deadly strife just because each aimed at unity, and yet at a unity based upon different principles. "There is no King but Cæsar," and "There is but One Ruler, Christ," were battle-cries which never could be used in harmony until Cæsar had submitted to the yoke of Christ. That day was yet to come, and before it came there was a deadly struggle. The Empire was drifting into persecution unrestrained, while the Christian shrank from revolt and wished to be at peace. But his lot was hard and his task, to follow Christ and yet obey the State, was impossible because it was made so by the State itself.

XXI.

ALEXANDRIA.

It is strange to think of the cities which have gathered into themselves so much of the past, and then handed it down, quickened and transformed, to after-days. Some of these cities still endure, and are, now as ever, centres of life and thought; some, with the changing swing of time,

have reappeared as if from hiding, and taken their seat again among the great. It might be hard to place Alexandria in any of these classes, but from 330 B.C. to A.D. 640 it was not only the largest commercial city of the East, but also the centre of the intellectual world. It was stamped with the memories of Alexander's triumphs, spreading Hellenic thought throughout the world; it had absorbed pagan speculations and Jewish thought. It was Eastern and Western at once. With the magnificent library of the Ptolemies it had an inheritance of learning, not wholly dissipated when three collections of works had been burnt. Where varied streams of interest meet, thought is always quick and subtle. It was so here. A new city of mighty charm and far-reaching fascination grew up, with ancient Egypt for its background, with a Jewish colony taking in one-third of its population, and with quickly changing Europe before it. No one was idle there, even if his employment was not always wise. Intellectually, Alexandria was the chosen home of criticism and speculation, although its thought was perhaps suggestive rather than complete and instructive. The news of Christianity, and Christianity itself, were certain to reach to such a centre, but much depended upon how the message was received and how its teaching was to be preserved. It might be listened to, and yet it might be distorted. Its attractions might be felt, and then it might be put aside, as it were, in a Pantheon of religious philosophies.

How Christianity reached Alexandria, the home of Apollos, we do not know; it is not surprising that some Gnostic teachers, founders of heretical schools, are the first Christians or semi-Christians we hear of. But if there were heretical schools of thought, there was also

the great Church from which they wandered, and early in the third century we have lists of ten Bishops reaching backwards. Thus, on the one hand we have unrestrained speculation; on the other we have the ordinary careful Church organization. And just because it works for the future, even if in silence, the Church's organization triumphed. Work which builds for the future is always stronger than thought which delivers itself to its single day, and often merely ploughs the sand. Not that the Church was opposed either to learning or to thought. "It did not censure theology, but only bad theology." And it soon brought forth the greatest Christian school of early days. This is the famous Catechetical School of Alexandria. Other early Bishoprics had their diocesan schools, and throughout the Middle Ages there were attempts to revive these training schools for the ministry. When the Council of Trent made diocesan seminaries the rule, it was only reviving an older custom. In our own country we can remember with pride that the work done by medieval cathedral schools for general education outweighed that done by the monasteries. The care of the Church for education, not only with a view to its ministry, but generally, is one of its oldest traditions, and one which has brought as much good to it as to the world at large. The Church can, for instance, as little leave Universities uncared for as it can forget the education of the poor. One of the great tasks of our own Church will be to provide, as it has never done before, for the better education and training of its clergy. This cannot be left to chance, and the Church as a body must undertake so great a work.

Pantænus (about A.D. 180) was the first head of the Alexandrian School whose name has come down to us,

but he was not its founder. Strangely enough, his story has a parallel in later days. He had gone as a missionary to India before he became head of the school, and such missionary zeal at Alexandria reminds us of Eulogius, the Bishop of Alexandria, who in after-days was to help by his intercessions the mission of S. Gregory the Great to England, and who was therefore told of Ethelbert's baptism. S. Clement of Alexandria, himself head of the Catechetical School A.D. 190-203, says he had learnt of many teachers in varied lands, but that Pantænus was the best. After Clement, the school had soon traditions of its own.

The Church always has to face teaching and interests and knowledge which are not of necessity Christian. How is it to deal with them? There was for the early Christians the question of a classical learning steeped in heathenism, and with all the abuses of heathenism behind it. There is always the question of art and of the theatre. The less learned among the monks and the English Puritans had each in this case their decided answer. So, too, when natural science began its modern progress with the theory of development there was opposition from some faint-hearted Christians. But now we can take stock of all that we have gained. We remember, too, the Christian Renaissance, and what a revived study of the classical languages did then for the world; we see that the former supposed opposition between science and religion is happily a thing of the past. Our creed and our faith remain where they always were; we can give them a fuller interpretation and apply them more clearly to the facts of the universe and its life. So we come better to understand the path which God has marked out for us and in which He leads us.

XXII.

S. CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA.

S. Clement of Alexandria seems to have been an Athenian and a heathen who, after many travels and much study and searching after God, became a Christian, and found a fitting home at Alexandria, where Greek learning was valued. Justin Martyr, for example, had boldly claimed Socrates for Christ, and it was fittingly believed that through the wisdom of Greece God Himself had taught the world. It, like the Jewish law, had been a schoolmaster preparing the way for Christ. Thus, to S. Clement all learning was sacred, and nothing was to be despised. Just about the time when S. Irenæus was making his claim for Christianity as the teacher of the world, S. Clement became head of the Alexandrian School, which, although closely connected with the Bishop, was largely independent. It was "not unlike a missionary college in modern India."

Clement's learning was immense, and yet it did not blunt his keen interest in everything fresh and in all that concerned mankind. The same vivid delight in life he brought into Christianity, and no detail of it was too small for his notice. Christians were to avoid the luxury of Alexandrian life; they did not need vessels of silver or gold, and the house, with all its belongings, should befit its Christian owner. In daily life there are things, such as spitting, which the Christian gentleman should avoid.

But this wide outlook upon life and knowledge and mankind did not weaken his hold upon Christ; it was "his strong sympathy with the simplest view of the Christian faith that made the life-work of Clement possible."

He reminds us of Dean Church in his village sermons, or Hort in his country village, "Faith and love are not matters of teaching." "Salvation is following Christ." But the Christian had to make philosophy and learning his own, and this wise advice of Clement's was proved true in days to come. And yet to tread this path has its dangers for many. Possibly as many temptations arise on the intellectual side for man as on the bodily side or on the side of pleasure. It is difficult to keep proportion, and probably many people in the nineteenth century were so busied with the intellectual outworks of life that they missed the citadel itself. Now in the twentieth century men are turning more and more to Christ Himself.

If we judged Clement solely by his more learned works, and by his too fanciful allegorizing of the Scriptures, for instance, we should do him a great injustice. He ran some risks, and he did not always bring his speculations and his learning into accord with a simple faith. It was hard to systematize the vast material he collected. But in his love of the Scriptures and his high standard of Christianity all can follow him. In his *Pædagogus* (or Tutor) he dealt with the training of the Christian character. In his homily, "Who is the Rich Man that is being Saved?" he shows us how he ever tried to draw men to Christ. We can see how Christ was the real centre of his life; we can imagine him, if the call came, making a mighty sacrifice and giving up his philosophy or his search after learning. We can never imagine him giving up Christ. His life and labours came to the same end as a question and answer in our own Ordination of Priests. The Bishop asks: "Will you be diligent in prayer and in reading of the Holy Scriptures, and in such

studies as help to the knowledge of the same, laying aside the study of the world and the flesh?” And the candidate for the priesthood answers: “I will endeavour myself to do so, the Lord being my helper.” S. Clement at Alexandria answered, as it were, that same question in the same way. But when the persecution under Septimius Severus arose (A.D. 203) he had to flee; he was found at Cæsarea, where he guided the Church when its Bishop was imprisoned. Before A.D. 215 he had died, but he left behind him his great pupil Origen; he himself passed to the reward he had earned by a life of restless search for God and good.

XXIII.

“THE SHEPHERD” OF HERMAS.

It is not always easy to date a book from its contents, and “The Shepherd” of Hermas is an instance of the difficulty. It is an allegory, made up of five visions, twelve mandates (or commandments), and ten similitudes (or parables).

The writer speaks of himself as a slave, bought by a Roman lady, Rhoda; after her death he is travelling to Cumæ, the abode of the Sibyl, when he is borne by a spirit into a pathless waste. Here he is praying and confessing his sins, when Rhoda hails him from heaven. Afterwards an aged woman in a chair appears (who is the Church, although he takes her for the Sibyl), and reads to him from a book which she carried. She leaves him with the exhortation: “Be manful, Hermas.” In the second vision, which comes to him after he had known his sins, the Church again appears, this time walking

about and reading a little book. She asks him if he could repeat these things to the elect of God, and so he copies the book word for word, although he cannot understand it. Fifteen days later its meaning is revealed to him. His children have been disobedient to God, have blasphemed the Lord, and betrayed their parents. He is to urge them to repentance, after which their sins shall be forgiven, if only they put away doubts from their minds and repent with their whole heart. But this door of repentance is only open up to a limited day. He was, moreover, to charge those who had the rule over the Church to order their ways in righteousness. Thus Hermas was to deal with the transgressions of his house, which, because he had been unmindful of them, had now become troubles of his own.

In the third vision the Church, this time young and beautiful, again appears to him, and he sees the building of a wondrous tower: some stones are rejected, and others are shaped afresh, while some are built in just as they are. In the fourth vision he was met by a strange leviathan, out of whose mouth went fiery locusts. A voice had come to him just before, "Doubt not, Hermas," and he went boldly on, while the beast moved towards him with a whirr as if about to make havoc of a city. But, because he had put on the fear of the Lord, as it came closer it stretched itself along the ground, only putting out its tongue, and so he passed safely on. The Church as a virgin, all in white and with white hair (like Christ Himself in Perpetua's vision), hailed him and explained the wondrous appearance of the beast.

In the fifth vision the Shepherd "to whom he had been delivered" appears, and bids him write the mandates and similitudes he is about to deliver. The aged woman,

too, in the second vision had bidden him write two books, one for Clement and one for Grapte. Clement was to send his copy to the cities which were without, since that was his commission; while Grapte was to admonish the widows and orphans, much as a deaconess would. Hermas himself was to read to Rome, with the elders who presided over its Church. This mention of Clement, with a position and duties that belonged to a Bishop, has led some to date the “ Shepherd ” in his day (about A.D. 95). On the other hand, the writer of the Muratorian Fragment says that Hermas wrote under Pius, whose brother he was, and who was Bishop of Rome (about A.D. 140). But if the work be taken only as an allegory, the reference to Clement might be only a literary device. The tone of the book, and its repeated mention of persecutions for the Name, would suit better with an early date in the second century.

Modern interpretations given of the whole work vary greatly, and the impression made by it upon modern writers also varies greatly; in its own day it had great popularity, being, indeed, ranked by some among the canonical books, although in the end Hermas was merely numbered among the Apostolic Fathers. It is generally agreed that the writer was among the prophets, such as we read of in the New Testament—those who had the gift of prophecy or, as we should say, of preaching. And this gives the work a special interest, as it shows what second century prophecy was.

XXIV.

THE SHEPHERD.

Hermas was also one who had other responsibility for his brethren, and who had a deep knowledge of the human soul and its needs. We might, indeed, take his family, who had been "disobedient unto God," blasphemers of the Lord, and betrayers of their parents, whom he did not admonish but suffered to be corrupted, to be rather his flock, whose sins a sensitive pastor wept over as his own misdeeds. Sensitive indeed he was, for the sin of his own, with which his mistress reproached him, seems to have been at the most a thought of evil rather than the licentiousness which some assume. We prefer to take him as himself a pastor, full of zeal for his flock.

It is for their sake he preaches repentance, which is the whole burden of the allegory. He looks upon the seed which grows so variously, upon the stones for the tower which are so different in their worth, upon the branches, some dead, some green, and some fruitful, as might a parish priest upon the differing members of his flock. Some had betrayed their Lord, some had forsaken Him for pleasure or for wealth; there were even deacons who had, as so many were to do in later years, and not seldom in Rome itself, made their office one of gain. There were some who in time of trial had failed to overcome; there were others who had suffered bravely for the Name, and in their proved saintship he could rejoice. The pathetic insistence with which he returns time after time to the cry of repentance shows us the pastor even more than the prophet.

And he has all the pastor's knowledge and love of

souls. Consider some of his sayings: "Repentance is great understanding." "If at any time, when thou hast made a request of the Lord, thou receive it somewhat slowly, doubt not because thou didst not receive the request of thy soul speedily; for it is surely because of some temptation or some trespass which thou art not aware of that thou receivedst thy request the more slowly. . . . But if thou faint and be of doubtful mind when thou askest, blame thyself, and not Him that giveth unto thee." "Many who are unstable in their counsels take in hand overmuch, and nothing succeeds at all with them. Then they say that they are not prospered in their affairs; and it entereth not into their heart that they have done amiss, but they blame the Lord." "Punishment and torment have long memories." Ill-temper, which "straightens" the Holy Spirit in His work, is illustrated by a comparison of it to a drop of wormwood in a jar of honey. All this is practical, and shows an artist in true priestcraft; the whole treatment of confession and repentance belongs to a man for whom the problem was urgent, although the Church had not as yet dealt with it systematically.

And, furthermore, the stress laid upon the work of the Church betokens one of its ministers who knew its life and felt his own responsibility within it. The Church was depicted as old, because it was from the beginning, hence its claim to authority. Bishops given to hospitality and other deeds proper to them are glorious in the sight of God, and their place is already with the angels. "The Apostles and Bishops and teachers and deacons who walked in godly gravity, and ministered purely and gravely . . . to the elect of God," were those square white stones of the tower which fitted perfectly in their joinings.

The angel who spake to him bade him continue steadfast in his ministry of penitence, and his last charge to him was: "Quit thee manfully in this ministry, rehearse unto every man the mighty acts of the Lord, and thou shalt find favour in this ministry." Otherwise it might be that, while he tarried in his office, the tower of Christ's temple might be built without the stones he should prepare. With this charge the angel left him, saying that the true Shepherd would come to His house, bringing with Him the virgins who bore the gifts of the Spirit. Thus the Shepherd of one city-flock might always dwell, as indeed he should, with the great Shepherd of souls.

XXV.

A SECOND-CENTURY SERMON.

In the manuscript which contains the Epistle of S. Clement and the Teaching of the Twelve Apostles there is also found a homily or sermon which was, at one time, called the Second Epistle of S. Clement to the Corinthians. But while it is certain that S. Clement did write the Epistle, there is no evidence that he wrote the homily. Thus it is wrongly called an Epistle, and there is no evidence for its being by S. Clement. On the other hand, the little work is made even more interesting to us if it is a sermon, for we have many more early Epistles than we have early sermons.

And a sermon it clearly is, for it says: "Let us not think to give heed and believe now only, while we are admonished by the presbyters; but likewise, when we have departed home, let us remember the commandments of the Lord." This is what might be said, and indeed

is often said, in a sermon now. And again it says: "After the God of truth, I read to you an exhortation, . . . so that ye may save both yourselves and him that readeth in the midst of you. . . ." This is just what Justin Martyr leads us to expect in a sermon of the day, for the Prophets were first read, and then the president gave instruction and invited his hearers to imitation of good things. And in all likelihood the sermon was preached at Corinth, for not only is it found along with an Epistle to the Corinthians, but it alludes to the Isthmian games and contests which took place near their city. It was quite natural that a sermon preached at Corinth should have been treasured up there along with a letter sent thither. As a sermon, then, we may take it, and as one preached to the Corinthian Church which we read of so much in the New Testament. We have an account (Acts xviii.) of the foundation of the Church there; we have the Epistles of S. Paul to it, giving us so vivid a picture of the Christians there, with their quarrels and schisms, wonderful gifts of the Spirit, and enthusiasms needing guidance. Then we saw from S. Clement's Epistle that the tendency to schisms and separation continued up to his day, and that the Roman Christians through him, their Bishop, tried to reason with their Corinthian brethren.

Now let us turn to this second-century sermon preached at Corinth, full of touches reminding us of the "Shepherd" of Hermas, who himself ministered to a congregation at Rome. The sermon begins with the words: "Brethren, we ought so to think of Jesus Christ, as of God, as of the Judge of quick and dead. And we ought not to think mean things of our Salvation; for when we think mean things of Him, we expect also to receive mean

things." Thus the exhortation starts from the work and the authority of Christ as God, and of the Christian's responsibility to Him. The thought of Christ, and the rising above the mean things of the world to the height of Christ, was specially fitted for a congregation so intent upon the gifts of earth and its rivalries as to lose sight of unity in Him. They were to honour Christ with hearts as well as lips, and then to pay a fitting recompense to Him. They were to "confess Him in their works, by loving one another, by not committing adultery, nor speaking evil one against another, nor envying, but being temperate, merciful, kindly." And they "ought to have fellow-feeling one with another, and not to be covetous." S. Paul, who knew the special temptations of Corinth, had dealt with their sins in special cases. But the devils of impurity and faction had returned to their old abode.

The preacher goes on (again reminding us of S. Paul): "So then, my brethren, let us contend, knowing that the contest is nigh at hand," for not all were crowned. If they cannot all be crowned, let them at least come near the crown. But their sins blasphemed the name of God. When the Gentiles, as non-Christians were already called, saw that Christians not only did not love those who hated them, but did not love those who loved them, they laughed them to scorn, and the Name was blasphemed. Here was a loud call to brotherhood. If they did the will of God their Father, they would be of "the first Church, which is spiritual, which was created before the sun and moon" (we think here of Hermas' vision of the Church as a woman aged, because it had been from everlasting). "The Church, being spiritual, was manifested in the flesh of Christ," and one who "hath

dealt wantonly with the flesh hath dealt wantonly with the Church." Minister and flock were thus bound together in the observance of continence, as of all else. For "whosoever performeth it," says the preacher, "shall not repent thereof, but shall save both himself and me his counsellor. For it is no mean reward to convert a wandering and perishing soul, that it may be saved." It was this love of souls, learnt by the pastors from the great Pastor Pastorum (Shepherd of Shepherds), which carried the Church in triumph through the world.

Practical, too (again like Hermas), was the preacher. "Almsgiving is a good thing, even as repentance from sin. Fasting is better than prayer, but almsgiving than both. And *love covereth a multitude of sins*, but prayer out of a good conscience delivereth from death. Blessed is every man that is found full of these. For almsgiving lifteth off the burden of sin." And just as Hermas laid stress on his own sinfulness, so did the preacher here, speaking of himself "as an utter sinner, and not yet escaped from temptation, but being still among the engines of the devil, and doing his diligence to follow after righteousness."

Great, as he knew well, was the force of example. He asked his hearers (those to whom he read an exhortation) to give heed to the things which are written, so that they might save both themselves and him that read in the midst of them (we are reminded here of S. Paul's words at the end of 1 Tim. iv., and, indeed, the homily is full of reminiscences of the Apostle's writings). He asked them as a reward to repent with their whole heart, and so bring salvation and life to themselves. And for this request he gives a reason, which brings before us a picture, not of the grown-up converts of the first generation, but of

whole households with growing families serving Christ. "For doing this," he says, "we shall set a goal for all the young who desire to toil in the study of piety and of the goodness of God." "We are contending in the lists of a living God; and we are trained by the present life, that we may be crowned with the future."

The sermon ends with the ascription: "So to the only God invisible, the Father of Truth, who sent forth unto us the Saviour and Prince of immortality, through whom also He made manifest unto us the truth and the heavenly life, to Him be the glory for ever and ever. Amen."

XXVI.

"THE TEACHING OF THE TWELVE APOSTLES."

A wonderful chapter of history could be written on the strange fortunes of manuscripts, the ways in which they have come down to us, have been lost or sometimes found. When in 1883 Philotheus Bryennius, afterwards Metropolitan of Nicomedia, found in the library of a monastery at Constantinople one ancient manuscript, the whole learned world was moved. It had been written in 1056 (just about the time when the Eastern and Western Churches were finally severed), and it contained the only complete Greek text of the Epistle of S. Clement of Rome, and of the homily which is commonly called his Second Epistle. But these works had long been known, and so there was a greater excitement caused by something else it contained; this was a short work, apparently belonging to a very early date, and called the "Teaching (or Didaché) of the Twelve Apostles to the Gentiles," or, more shortly, the "Teaching of the Twelve

Apostles.” It had long been known that such a work existed, and now it could be read. The first part (in six short chapters) treats of the Two Ways of Life and Death, and this might be a preparation for Baptism. The second part, chapters vii. to x., treats of Holy Baptism, Fasting and Prayer, and the Holy Eucharist. The remaining chapters, which deal with the Church, its officers, and its worship, led to most discussion because of the prominence of the prophets in it. It was not easy to fix the date to which this organization belonged; those who held the view that Christianity was originally a merely spiritual teaching, without organization, welcomed the appearance of the book, for it favoured their opinion; while others, who more reasonably thought the growth of Church organization more regular and settled, found difficulties in the work. Hence there has been much variance of opinion as to the date which it was written; some have put it early in the second century, while the late Dr. Bigg put it in the fourth. Quite lately the Dean of Wells has put forward new doubts, but leaving aside these very important discussions, we may turn to other features of the work.

As a manual of instruction it is slight, and probably much like others. We are so apt to take for granted a high moral standard among Christians that we do not remember often or deeply enough how easy even Christians, living like ourselves in a Christian society, may fall into sin. But a Christian living in a corrupt and heathen society had far greater temptations, much as a convert in the mission fields has to-day. We should not forget the atmosphere in which early Christians lived, corrupt and full of temptations. The protection of the Church, with its brotherhood, was a safeguard of the utmost value.

As to Baptism we are told, having first given the preparation of instruction, "baptize in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost in living water." If there is no running water, then cold or even warm water may be used. "And before the Baptism let the baptizer and him that is baptized fast, and such others as can; and thou shalt enjoin the baptized to fast for one or two days before."

And as regards the Eucharist, "give thanks in this manner: First for the cup (*the peculiarity of this order may be noted*). We thank Thee, our Father, for the holy vine of David, Thy servant, which Thou didst make known to us through Jesus, Thy servant. Glory be to Thee for ever. And for the broken bread. We thank Thee, our Father, for the life and knowledge which Thou didst make known to us through Jesus, Thy servant. Glory be to Thee for ever. As this bread that is broken was scattered upon the mountains, and gathered together, and became one, so let Thy Church be gathered together from the ends of the earth into Thy kingdom; for Thine is the glory and the power through Jesus Christ for ever. And let none eat nor drink of your Eucharist, but they that are baptized into the name of the Lord; for as touching this the Lord hath said: Give not that which is holy to the dogs.

"And, after ye are filled, give thanks thus: We thank Thee, Holy Father, for Thy name, which Thou hast made to dwell in our hearts, and for the knowledge, faith, and immortality, which Thou didst make known to us through Jesus, Thy servant. Glory be to Thee for ever. Thou, Almighty Lord, didst create all things for Thy name's sake, and gavest meat and drink for men to enjoy, that they might give thanks to Thee, and to us didst

vouchsafe spiritual meat and drink and life eternal, through Thy servant. Above all, we thank Thee because Thou art mighty. Glory be to Thee for ever. Remember, Lord, Thy Church, to deliver her from all evil, and to perfect her in Thy love, and gather together from the four winds her that is sanctified into Thy kingdom which Thou didst prepare for her. For Thine is the power and the glory for ever. Come grace, and let this world pass away. Hosanna to the God of David. If any is holy, let him come; if any is unholy, let him repent. Maranatha. Amen.”

A later chapter gives some practical advice which may remind us how attractive Christian brotherhood proved to outsiders. In our days this virtue is often disregarded. People may worship side by side for years, and never know each other; a stranger may appear in a congregation, and a stranger he will remain. The charity which binds Christian brethren together may make us intercede for Indians or Chinese, but sometimes it leaves us forgetful of our brethren near at hand. Hence it is often unreal and cold, because it does not concern itself with what is closest to us, and ought to be the means of quickening us to a greater interest. It was not so in the primitive Church: the brethren from afar sometimes brought with them letters of commendation and were welcomed, while those nearer home were cherished. The Didaché says: “And on the Lord’s Day of the Lord come together and break bread and give thanks, having first confessed your transgressions, that our sacrifice may be pure. But whoso hath a dispute with his fellow, let him not come together with you until they be reconciled, that our sacrifice be not polluted. For this is that which was spoken of by the Lord: In every place and time offer Me

a pure sacrifice [see Mal. i. 11]; for I am a great King, saith the Lord, and My name is wonderful among the Gentiles."

Even if the little work cannot be taken as certainly historical, if it differs from the second-century writings in many ways, yet here in its closing picture of Christian brotherhood, with its banishment of strife and envy, it is admirable and truly Apostolic.

XXVII.

JUSTIN MARTYR AND CHRISTIAN WORSHIP.

The Apologists, sure of their own faith and with a knowledge of the world around them, set out to justify Christianity before both the State and the reason of mankind. Men who set out on such a task are met by one great danger. Those who seek for their religion the support of politics can easily earn a reputation for practical wisdom, or even for statesmanship, by putting out of sight the supernatural side of Christianity, either by representing it as a specially wise political philosophy, or by lowering its unique claim to supremacy in our lives. Much in the same way, it is very easy to lose sight of the supernatural revelation in trying to insist upon the reasonableness of the faith. But the Apologists were able to avoid these special dangers of forgetting the supernatural, because they never forgot the Church as a society, with its worship, its brotherhood, and its Sacraments. They never lost sight of the fact that Christianity was a real revelation of God in Christ. It might agree with reason, and help them to build up a philosophy, it might work in fellowship with the State, but these were merely results

of its truth. The essence of Christianity was something greater: it was in itself life in Christ. Conversion to Christ was more than any merely intellectual process or deduction from the facts of life, although reason might be its support and history its handmaid.

But within the Church this revelation was realized and applied to life. "In what manner we dedicated ourselves to God, and were new-made through Christ, I will explain," says Justin Martyr in his *Apology* (chaps. lxi.-lxii.). "All who are persuaded and believe that the things which are taught and affirmed by us are true, and assert that they can live accordingly, are taught to pray and beseech God with fasting to grant them forgiveness of their former sins; and we fast and pray with them. Then we bring them where there is water; and after the same manner of regeneration after which we also were regenerated ourselves, they are regenerated. For in the name of God the Father and Lord of all things, and of our Saviour Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Ghost, they then receive the washing of water; for indeed Christ said, Except ye be born again, ye shall not enter the kingdom of heaven. . . . And we have received the following reason from the Apostle for so doing: since we were ignorant of our first birth of necessity, and were brought up in evil customs and evil training, in order that we might not remain the children of necessity and of ignorance, but become children of freewill and of knowledge, and that we might obtain remission of the sins which we had formerly committed, in the water there is called over him who chooses the new birth and repents of his sins the name of God the Father and Lord of all things; and calling Him by this name alone, we bring to the laver the person to be washed. . . . Now this washing

is called Illumination, because they who learn the meaning of these things are illuminated in their mind. And in the name of Jesus Christ, who was crucified under Pontius Pilate, and in the name of the Holy Ghost, who foretold by the prophets all these things about Jesus, does he who is illuminated receive his washing."

In this description of Baptism there are many things worth notice. We see the name of Pontius Pilate (as in our own Creed), fixing the historical event. And the explanation of Baptism reminds us of the explanation given in our own Church Catechism.

Then there follows (chaps. lxv.-lxvi.) a further description of Christian worship. "But we, after we have thus washed him who has been convinced and has assented to our teaching, bring him to the place where those who are called brethren are assembled, in order that we may offer hearty prayers in common for ourselves and for the baptized person; and for all others in every place, that we may be counted worthy, now that we have learnt the truth, by our works also to be found good citizens and keepers of the commandments, so that we may be saved with an everlasting salvation. Having ended the prayers, we salute one another with a kiss. There is then brought to the president of the brethren bread and a cup of wine mixed with water; and he, taking them, gives praise and glory to the Father of the universe through the name of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, and offers thanks at considerable length for our being counted worthy to receive these things at His hands. And when he has ended the prayers and thanksgivings, all the people present express their assent by saying 'Amen.' This word answers in the Hebrew language to 'so be it.' And when the president has given thank

and all the people have expressed their assent, those who are called by us deacons give to each of these present to partake of the bread and wine mixed with water over which the thanksgiving was pronounced, and to those who are absent they convey away a portion.

“And this food is called among us the Eucharist, of which no one is allowed to partake but the man who believes that the things which we teach are true, and who has been washed with the washing that is for the remission of sins and unto regeneration, and who is so living as Christ has enjoined. For not as common bread and common drink do we receive them; but in like manner as Jesus Christ our Saviour, having been made flesh by the word of God, had both flesh and blood for our salvation, so likewise have we been taught that the food which is blessed by the prayer of His word, and from which our blood and flesh by transmutation are nourished, is the flesh and blood of that Jesus who was made flesh.” He then adds a short account of our Lord’s institution of the Eucharist, and afterwards (chap. lxvii.) he goes on to say that “on the day called Sunday, all who live in cities or in the country around them gather together to one place, and the memoirs of the Apostles or the writings of the prophets are read, so long as time permits; then, when the reader has ceased, the president gives verbal instruction and exhorts to the imitators of these good things. Then we all rise together and pray,” and the Eucharist is celebrated. After the administration a portion is sent by the deacons to those who are absent. And those who were well to do and willing gave each what he thought fit for orphans and widows, and the needy through sickness or other cause, and prisoners and strangers. Sunday was, Justin explains, the day on

which they held their common assembly, because it was the first day on which God, having wrought a change in the darkness and in matter, made the world, and it was also the day on which Christ rose from the dead.

This account, given incidentally and to convince the Emperor that Christians were not evil-doers, is full of interest; the ritual answers closely to what we find when we come to liturgic documents in plenty some three centuries later. The deacons help in the administration; the Eucharistic prayer reminds us of that given by S. Clement of Rome in his Epistle, or of the prayer of S. Polycarp. Specially may we note the prayer for Christians everywhere, which again reminds us of Polycarp's remembering Christians everywhere, and we think of our own prayer for the "whole state of Christ's Church Militant here in earth." Just when the Church was beginning to use its name of Catholic or Universal, Christians everywhere were bound together by their prayers as well as in their brotherhood. The "Amen" had a solemnity in itself (again we remember Polycarp "saying his Amen"), a real entrance by the congregation into the spirit of the prayer, very different from the glib or formal repetition of it into which we slip. But, beyond everything else, we see, as indeed we can in all primitive writings, the place held by the Sunday Eucharist in Christian life and worship.

XXVIII.

THE GROWTH OF CHRISTIANITY.

We have already said that the study of Church history should begin with the Acts of the Apostles, and, indeed, with the New Testament as a whole. When we turn

to that book we can see for ourselves the growth of Christianity to begin with, at Jerusalem, then throughout Palestine, and afterwards beyond its borders. Thus the field of mission work grew, and the actual needs of every day led to an organization of finance and of evangelization under the Apostles. Even in the earthly life of our Lord we see the beginning of something of the kind. S. Luke, who had seen so much of the work of S. Paul, notices for us (viii. 1-3) the women who travelled with our Lord and His disciples, ministering to them of their substance. Our Lord was now going "through cities and villages, preaching and bringing the good tidings of the kingdom of God," and with Him were the twelve; hence some arrangements had to be made for the provision of daily food. S. Luke, who had the quick eye of a real historian for noticing growth and marking its stages, goes on (ix. 7) to tell us of the mission of the twelve when our Lord sent them forth (verse 2) "to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick; and (x. 7) we read further of the mission of the seventy, not so much to work in an independent way, as did the twelve, but to go as forerunners before His face, whither He Himself was about to come. Such was the growth of the Church and of its organization under our Lord Himself on earth.

But if this was an outward growth, called forth by the stress of mission work, it was inspired by the power of our Lord, withdrawing Himself to the mountain for prayer (ix. 28), and showing the chosen three His glory at the Transfiguration. They, too, had to learn for themselves the power of prayer, and, indeed, they felt their need of it so much as to ask, "Lord, teach us to pray" (xi. 1). And yet it is strange to notice how even in these early days two things which were to trouble

the future Church greatly had already begun to work inside it. "There arose a reasoning among them which should be greatest" (xi. 46). And at Corinth, as well as elsewhere, such rivalry was to arise; the second-century writings are full of warnings against it. And, again, the disciples were troubled because (verse 49) they saw one casting out devils in the name of Christ, and they forbade him, because he followed not with them. But our Lord's answer to their appeal for guidance in such a case was: "Forbid him not, for he that is against you is for you." Surely the Christians in later days must have felt the truth of this as they looked upon the vast good the Empire wrought, as they saw the beauty of some pagan yet noble lives, or were brought face to face with some heathen teacher who was not far from the kingdom of God. And yet the relation of the Church to the world around it had another side. Christ said, "He that is not with Me is against Me"; and as the Church met with hatred and opposition from philosophic Emperor or heathen moralist the early Christians were thrown back, not, perhaps, upon themselves, but upon Christ above them and within them. For as we look at the early Church, it is pathetic and strangely humbling for ourselves to see how the Church which was His Body really drank of His Spirit and tried to follow in His steps. That is why the second century, sometimes denounced as an age of mere organization, is really the time in which the Church gathered itself together for the great work it had to undertake.

The Christian standpoint was firmly taken. "For what reason, men of Greece," says Tatian (chap. viii.), "do you wish to bring civil powers, as in a pugilistic encounter, into collision with us? And if I am not

disposed to comply with the usages of some of them, why am I to be abhorred as a vile miscreant? Does the Sovereign order the payment of tribute, I am ready to give it. Does my master command me to act as a bondsman and serve, I acknowledge the serfdom. Man is to be honoured as a fellow-man; God alone is to be feared, He who is not visible to human eyes, nor comes within the compass of human art. Only when I am commanded to deny Him will I not obey, but will rather die than show myself false and ungrateful." Justin is even fuller and more precise, while Athenagoras, another Apologist under Marcus Aurelius, says: "Why is a mere name [*i.e.*, that of Christian] odious to you? Names are not deserving of hatred; it is the unjust act that calls for penalty and punishment, and accordingly, with admiration of your mildness and gentleness, and your peaceful and benevolent disposition towards every man; individuals live in the possession of equal rights; and the cities, according to their rank, share in equal honours, and the whole Empire, under your intelligent sway, enjoys profound peace. Yet for us who are called Christians you have not in like manner cared; but although we commit no wrong—nay, as will appear in the sequel of what I say, are of all men most piously and righteously disposed towards the Deity and towards your government—you allow us to be harassed, plundered, and persecuted, the multitude making war upon us for our name alone. We venture, therefore, to lay our appeal before you." We cannot tell how much the appeal and the argument wrought towards their end, but we do see that the spirit of Christ and the Apostolic teaching inspired the second-century Church. It triumphed, not because of its argument or its righteousness, or even its sufferings,

but by the secret of its hidden life and its inner strength; it overcame because of the Christ who was one with it as it was one with Him.

XXIX.

THE CHRISTIAN BROTHERHOOD.

There was in the Christians of those days a simplicity of aim, avoiding the double-mindedness or wavering against which the Apostles had warned them, and which Hermas and the preacher of the homily at Corinth denounced; they really strove to be babes in malice, even if, like the Apologists and S. Clement of Alexandria, they strove equally not to be children in mind (1 Cor. xiv. 20). Here S. Paul had taught them the same lesson as S. John (1 John ii.), for they knew that if they continued in malice and resentfulness they could not live unto God (Hermas, Similitude ix.). Thus in their doctrine, as indeed in their very phraseology, the second-century teachers of the Church were imitators of the Apostles.

The work of the Apostles, too, of which we know the surface, was made possible by the deeply laid foundation of generous help in gifts which they received. The women who ministered to the Lord had their imitators in the next generation. Thus we find (Acts xviii. 5) S. Paul at Corinth had been abiding with Aquila and Priscilla, and working with them at their common trade of tent-making. Then when Silas and Timothy came down from Macedonia, bringing with them the gifts of the Churches (Phil. iv. 15), he was "constrained by the word," giving himself up, as now he could, to the work of an Apostle. Thus we can understand that the custom of

collections, which S. Paul himself had regulated for Corinth and Galatian Churches (1 Cor. xvi. and 2 Cor. viii.) had the force of an Apostolic custom. And we may notice that it was Gentile Christians who first, as indeed we might expect, showed generosity in this way.

If we think that the early Church was so busied with thought over lofty doctrines or with an ethical ordering of life as to forget the necessary task of organization, or even of gathering money to further the work, we are forgetting a specially interesting side of the Church's life. The generous support which Gentile Christians gave to the poor Churches of Judæa, differing as these did from themselves in speech and habit, knit the whole Church together. And doubtless the Gentile Churches found profit for themselves and gained the blessing which awaits a giver, just as the devotion of many a Church to-day is quickened by its care for missions. The "collection" formed, therefore, a visible expression of that far-reaching brotherhood which otherwise would have been rooted merely in their common faith. Our own Church in the Stuart and Georgian periods did not, perhaps, rise to a high level of devotion, but the briefs or requests for alms, sometimes from Christians on the Continent, sometimes from those in England, sufferers from fire or famine or distress of any kind, did a little to lift our own church out of its local isolation.

This form of brotherhood had become fixed by the second century. Justin Martyr (Apology lxvii.) tells us travellers and prisoners were helped from the collections. Tertullian (Apology xxxix.) also tells us that Christians in prison, condemned to the mines, or sent to exile, all received help. The Church did not, as it were,

forget these prisoners of war. It is pleasant indeed to see that the Corinthian Church, if it had its defects, admired the beauty of charity. Its Bishop, Dionysius, writing to Rome about the year A.D. 170, says: "From the very first you have had this practice of helping all the brethren in every city and of sending contributions to many Churches in every city, thus in one case relieving the poverty of the needy, or in another providing for brethren in the mines. By these gifts, which ye have sent from the very first, you Romans keep up the hereditary customs of the Romans, a practice your Bishop Soter has not merely kept up, but even enlarged." In later centuries the Churches everywhere, and specially the rich Roman Church, kept up this generosity as a matter of the simplest duty. The journey of S. Ignatius, for instance, shows how vivid was the sense of brotherhood, which found a natural expression in giving hospitality and support. And he described the Roman Church as "the leader of love." So common was this service to the brethren that half a century later Lucian, satirizing the Christians, described how a certain impostor, Peregrinus, imprisoned in Syria, received from Asia "large sums of money," and so gained a considerable income. We naturally look on the dark side of the persecutions, and so too often forget how the darkness was shot through and through by the sunbeams of this brotherhood. It is a side of Christian life, a path for Christian love, upon which we ourselves, in days of endless openings and urgent calls, do well to think. In the picture given we have not gone beyond the second century. For later centuries we have even more and more striking illustrations. The collection for Jerusalem, begun by S. Paul and carried on by the Church, had grown into something

which knit the whole Church together, and which gave it strength and coherence to carry it through the age of persecution.

XXX.

THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH.

Christianity seems for the most part to have spread along the usual lines of travel and commerce. S. Paul, as we see in the Acts, went along the great Roman roads and did his work mainly in the great cities. Then from these centres Christianity spread farther afield: the parable of the mustard-seed which became a tree was fulfilled. Hermas expands it: "The mighty tree which overshadows plains, mountains, and all the earth, is God's law given to the whole world; and this law is God's Son preached to the ends of the earth. The people under its shadow are those who have heard the preaching and believed on Him." And Justin Martyr (to quote one passage out of many) says: "There is not a single race of human beings, barbarians, Greek, or whatever name you like to call them, nomads or vagrants or herdsmen living in tents, where prayers in the name of Jesus the crucified are not offered up." S. Irenæus speaks (as we have seen) of the Church as "scattered throughout the whole world," and also of "Churches settled in Germany, in Spain, in Gaul, throughout the East, in Egypt, in Libya, and in the middle parts of the world." Tertullian, writing about A.D. 177, says: "The cry is that the State is infested with Christians, in the fields, in the villages, in the lodging-houses. Both sexes, every age and condition of life, high rank itself, have gone over to the Christians." And he says again: "Nearly all the citizens of nearly

all your cities are Christians." This may be a little rhetorical, but the sober fact of great expansion must lie behind the claim; in another passage he gives a list of countries where Christianity is found, which includes "places in Britain inaccessible to the Romans." The preacher of the second-century homily already quoted says that Christians outnumbered Jews. Polycrates, Bishop of Ephesus about A.D. 190, says that he had met Christians from all parts of the Empire. Origen, however, writing in the first half of the third century, says that there were still nations, inside the Empire and outside, to whom Christianity had not yet reached, and that, compared with others, Christians were still few. But we are told that at the beginning of the fourth century there were districts in Asia, Phrygia, and Syria which were wholly Christian; and thus we find, as we might find to-day, different men making different estimates; and in the third century Christianity seems to have spread even more rapidly than in the second century.

In the year A.D. 251 we find at Rome 46 presbyters, 7 deacons, over 100 in minor orders, and 1,500 widows and others in distress supported by the Church. The total population of Rome was probably about 900,000, and the number of Christians may be estimated at 30,000. In Antioch, the great city of Syria, and indeed the greatest city of the East, there were at a later date (about A.D. 320) several churches, and there had been one Bishop Euodius before S. Ignatius. In this great centre Christianity was making good use of its Apostolic beginning, for Ignatius speaks of neighbouring Churches with Bishops of their own, and later on we find these local Bishops, along with others from a wider district, assembling in Synods at Antioch.

The picture we get thus is that of a fairly regular growth due to the missionary spirit which fired the Church. In those days, just as when S. Augustine came to England, it was not so much the preaching as the life of Christians that attracted converts. It is quite true preaching had its special work to do, and although some hearers might, like Felix, be only a little disturbed in mind and conscience, others who were searching out after God, or who felt their sinfulness, would first inquire and then be instructed for Baptism. But the sight of a small Christian community superior in morality and juster in dealings with their neighbours soon made its natural impression. From this cause, as well as from systematic evangelization, Christianity, specially in some parts, spread rapidly. It was thus in Bithynia, where there were Churches when S. Peter wrote his first Epistle. Some fifty years later Pliny, in his letter to Trajan, says of the same district, that "the infection of the superstition has spread not only through cities, but into villages and country districts." He is in hopes that a chance of repentance might bring round "a multitude of men," and yet we do not know the names of any missionaries to the district, and we know nothing of the way in which the faith reached it. It came there in the ordinary course of affairs. Christians, like other people, moved within the Empire for their trade or on their travels; some of them changed their habitation, and, like S. Irenæus or the deacon Sanctus at Vienne, passed from East to West, while others would pass from West to East. And every Christian, wherever he went, carried his religion with him, and tried to bring others to the Saviour he had found and the brotherhood in which he lived. It is not always so to-day.

But our picture is not complete if we only think of a number of Christian communities and of fresh ones constantly growing up. Local communities were linked together: so the Churches in Gaul were. Dionysius, Bishop of Corinth (about A.D. 170), wrote to the Bishops of Crete and also to the Bishops of Pontus, treating them as bodies with common interests and powers of common action. The question about the date of Easter caused councils to meet at Rome, in Pontus, in Gaul, and around Edessa. Tertullian speaks of councils in Greece. Thus the unity of the Church was, indeed, not being formed, for it had felt its unity through the Apostles, but being more deeply realized. The Bishops were stepping into the place of the Apostles, and it was one great duty of the Bishops (as we can see from the Epistles of S. Clement and of S. Ignatius) to keep up communication between the Churches. Thus, while the local Churches were deepening their own internal life, they were growing in brotherhood with local Churches outside. Groups of Churches, as in Asia Minor and in Gaul, were drawing together. And these groups were also joined with one another. Thus the Catholic Church was growing into fuller, larger life on earth. Thus the temple, built upon our Lord Jesus Christ as the chief corner-stone, was growing into a habitation of God through the Spirit.

XXXI.

THE CHURCH OUTSIDE THE EMPIRE.

Christianity spread easily within the Empire, where all was peace, but before A.D. 200 it had also gained a firm footing outside it as in Edessa. This city was the

capital of the Syrian-speaking kingdom of Osrhoene, which was a neighbour both of Parthia and of the Empire, with a great trade and a flourishing literature of its own, now unhappily mainly lost. Somewhere about A.D. 200 the royal family itself adopted Christianity, but the Romans conquered the little State in A.D. 216, although the dynasty went on. But the Roman rule brought with it persecution. Tatian, the Syrian had been one of the early missionaries there, and Bardesanes (or Bardaisan), born A.D. 154, was another. The former we have met as an Apologist, and as the compiler of a harmony of the Gospels. The latter had been educated up as a Gnostic, but afterwards gave up that heresy. He was essentially "a mystic," to use a later term, and, like some of even the best medieval mystics, was more intent upon the problems of personality and thought than upon the corporate life of the Church. His writings and his theology, tinged by purely Syrian thought, have a special beauty, unlike anything Greek. He is a striking figure among what he calls "the new race of us Christians," and that most beautiful allegory, the "Hymn of the Soul," is probably to be numbered among his many poems.

The soul, which has to pass through its pilgrimage on earth, goes through enchantments and strange adventures. At length, in its Father's home, it regains its robe, and the bright many-hued tunic was gathered around it. So the soul sings in its triumph:

"Clad in the robe, I betook me up to the gate of the palace,
 Bowing my head to the glorious sign of my Father that sent it;
 I had performed His behest, and He had fulfilled what He promised;
 So in the Satraps' Court I joined the throng of the chieftains;
 He with favour received me, and near Him I dwell in the kingdom."

It is the story of a prodigal son who, by his Father's grace, becomes a saved and enlightened soul.

The history of the Church to which Bardesanes belonged is specially interesting, for while Christianity wore to both Greek and Roman a Greek dress, in Edessa it was Syrian in a Syrian land. For the most part with the early Church elsewhere "the ecclesiastical vocabulary is Greek. Bishops, priests, deacons, the laity, Baptism, the Eucharist—all the terms are Greek in origin"; and so it remained nearly everywhere until, for the West, in the third century Latin replaced Greek. Nearly everywhere in the early centuries "the Church grew up on Greek soil." But Edessa was Syrian, and became a centre of missionary influence for the East, for India, Parthia, and Armenia. Its literature, which we are now recovering, was extensive and touched with the poetry of the East. But we should note that even this separated community did not keep itself apart. During the third century it enters into closer fellowship with the great Churches of Antioch and Rome. Thus Christianity joined diverse races together, as it was afterwards to do with Celt and English in our own island.

Legend ascribed its Christianity to S. Thomas, who sent a disciple, Addai, as his messenger. But an even more celebrated legend kept alive the family name of the dynasty, Abgar. For Abgar the Black was said to have besought our Lord, of whose miracles he had heard, to visit his realm, and the invitation was sent in a letter directed to "Jesus the Good Physician." In answer a teacher was promised, although Christ, about to ascend to His Father, could not go Himself. A picture of Him, however, was sent, and this picture, as well as our Lord's letter, had great fame throughout the Middle Ages. In our days, when the legend has long faded away, although its charm remains, the Syrian city, once a Crusading State, has a fresh and

different interest. Yet its thought, its literature, and its place in the early Christian world, all remind us of modern missions in the East, with their difficulties of thought and life, so unlike our own, although very like the distant past, and, what is more, with their power of fastening upon aspects and powers of Christianity which escape ourselves. For in the East, as in the West, our "God fulfils Himself in many ways."

XXXII.

MONTANISM.

In the Epistles of S. Paul, especially in those to the Corinthians, we read of people who claimed special gifts, notably that of prophecy or preaching in an exalted strain. Christians must believe in the guidance and inspiration of the Holy Spirit, both for the Church at large and for each Christian by himself. It is, however, a natural failing to look solely at oneself, one's own powers and views; this is individualism carried too far. When the belief in inspiration is combined with this individualistic tendency, all the facts of religious life are distorted out of all proportion one to another. A "heresy" of specially disastrous type is formed in the usual way by exaggeration of one article of belief, by letting one fact of religious life obscure the rest. It was so with Montanism in the second century, which began somewhere about A.D. 160, although possibly later.

At that time there appeared in Phrygia among an excitable people, a former priest of Cybele, Montanus by name, who carried into Christianity the methods and excitement of his old worship. He had special revelations

and moments of ecstasy. Two women, who were similarly gifted or afflicted, joined themselves to him, and the movement, as naturally would happen among an ignorant populace, spread widely through Phrygia and Asia; in the end it went even farther, and before half a century was over had gained hold of Africa and there won a powerful convert in Tertullian.

Some saw in these strange manifestations, as revivalists have often done in like cases since, an outpouring of the Spirit of God; others feared demoniac possession. But a multitude looked forward to a millennium of spiritual exaltation and happiness. They expected the immediate coming of our Lord, fixed for a special spot in Phrygia, and thither they betook themselves. Family ties, homes, businesses, the cultivation of the land, all these were neglected, but the city from heaven, the New Jerusalem, in which Christ was to reign, tarried long, while misery on earth claimed the poor wanderers for its own.

The Church was much disturbed by this outbreak of the new prophecy, and controversy, mingled with exhortations to sober thought, began. Local synods assembled, and some of the new leaders were cast out from the Church. The new teaching spread throughout the East, and even into the less excitable West. As the first generation of leaders who claimed special inspiration passed away, the ecstasies and strange manifestations also more or less disappeared. But the Montanists kept together as separate congregations, aiming now beyond everything else at a strict asceticism of life.

Thus on a large scale the question of personal inspiration, and of the superiority of such exceptionally gifted individuals, was raised. The question was, in some ways, like that of the disturbances at Corinth in the days of

S. Paul. Just as then, the inspired leaders claimed to supersede all ordinary organization and ministry. Their teaching, given through visions and ecstatic utterances, might claim to supersede the Apostolic traditions and the Scriptures. The Church, for a reply, was driven back, not only upon its traditions and its Scriptures, but its organization. Synods met to deal with the disturbances, and thus the Church as a body condemned the new individualism. It was pointed out that the ecstasies of the new prophets differed greatly from the more sober prophecies of Apostolic days, while the claim to represent the Holy Spirit was not only destructive of the continuity of the Church's life, but even an approach to blasphemy.

Some such movements, attracting crowds of simpler Christians, had appeared before and were to appear again. A Syrian Bishop led a multitude of people into the desert, where the survivors were arrested as brigands. A Bishop in Pontus foretold the end of the world, and his followers left their fields and cattle uncared for in view of the coming day. S. Cyprian tells us of a host starting on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem under the leadership of a prophetess. In our own century some of the Russian immigrants in Canada started off to meet the Lord, and the crowds, badly clad and hardly fed, suffered so much from the winter's cold that the Government had to lead them home under military force. Medieval and Reformation days give many other like instances. They nearly always arose from the combination of excitable leadership and ignorant masses. Both of these are always likely to seize upon some one part of Christian belief or Christian hope, and exaggerate it to the loss of all the other parts. Wise leadership and firm adherence to the order of the Church are needed when such troubles arise. We see, for instance,

in the Epistles to the Thessalonians, how different was the sober expectation of S. Paul about the coming end of the world from the excited anticipations of his converts.

We might well ask what elements in Montanism attracted a mind so powerful and devotion so intense as that of Tertullian. It seems to have been the asceticism which marked the later growth of Montanism, but doubtless he was attracted by the thorough surrender of the new body to the doctrine of personal inspiration by the Holy Spirit. Dissatisfaction with the growing worldliness of Christians, and their frequent compromise of principles probably urged him further. It is unwillingly that the Church loses any of her sons, although we may sometimes forget that the loss on the wanderer's side is even greater than for the Church. But over Tertullian's departure all later generations have rightly mourned.

Beneath the movement there lies a problem which often arises. The guidance of the Spirit is a part of spiritual experience, a necessity of Christian life. This is one thing. But the necessity of ecstatic manifestations at the moment of conversion, as in the early Wesleyan movement and other like revivals, is another. And the dependence of the Church upon fresh revelations given through special mediums brings in a new anti-Christian element, and is peculiarly liable to abuse or even fraud; it may, by the additions it brings to religion, even be destructive of Christ's revelation. In any case, it destroys the balance of mind which marks the teaching of the Apostles and the temper of the Church. To depend upon spiritual guidance alone, without Sacraments and the life of the Church, has always led, as we can see with modern Quakerism, to defective and purely individualistic views of life. We may well remember the words of Bishop Butler spoken to John

Wesley: "To pretend to extraordinary revelations and gifts of the Holy Spirit is a horrid thing, a very horrid thing." So spake a master of religious thought and a student of the human mind. By Christ working through His Apostles and His Church God gives to every man and to the world at large a sufficient salvation which needed no supplement such as Montanism offered.

XXXIII.

TERTULLIAN.—I.

If the kings of the earth in later days brought their glory and honour into the city of God, the nations had long before them walked in the light of it. We have seen how the Church had stretched its hand from the East to the West. Rome in the very days of the Apostles, Gaul in the second century, had begun their great historic work for Christ, and so the living temple grew. As each new tribe or people passed within its gates it brought, as happens still to-day, some new gift to its Saviour Christ, and wrought some special work for Him. In the East some of the cities of the Seven Churches have fallen into ruins, like Thyatira long ago, and in other places the candle of the Church has burnt itself out, so that their Christianity is but a memory of the past. So, too, in the West the once great Church of North Africa, which was once a mighty power for Christ, has ceased to be. But from the second to the fourth centuries it flourished with a rich life and character all its own. It was the great Latin Church of the West. At Rome until well on in the third century the Church was Greek, in language and in spirit. But in the great province of

Africa it took on a Latin dress. Carthage "stood next to Rome itself as the greatest city of the West," and "Roman Carthage was a splendid restoration of the old Phœnician city"; it was Roman, however, in its characteristics; not Phœnician, not Greek, like the other great cities of the Empire, but Roman. About the end of the second century Africa, as we have seen, had martyrs of its own, and although we do not know how the Faith had reached it, its spread was rapid. From Africa came Tertullian, and to his motherland he owed his fiery zeal, even if the sword of his speech was tempered by the language of its Latin conquerors.

He has been called the first Latin Churchman; to after ages and after theologians he was the "master." He was born at Carthage between A.D. 150 and 160, and died aged some seventy years. His parents were heathen, and his father was a centurion. His education was varied and ample. Greek he could read and write, but Latin he handled with a vigour and conciseness peculiar to himself; he studied philosophy, although he had little pleasure in its speculations; from Roman law he gained a love of clearness and system, and a habit of concise expression, which went far towards forming Western theology. In argument—and most of his Christian writings are arguments—he was merciless to opponents and thorough in his devotion to his cause. His mind so gifted, and his powers so trained, he gave whole-heartedly to his God and his Saviour. For him there was no half-service, no talents he wished to hide. He gave all, and from others he asked the same complete devotion, the same sincerity, as he had himself.

To a trained lawyer two things above all are dear: in practical life, legal institutions; and in matters of thought,

clearness of expression. Tertullian had caught the spirit of Roman organization and law; he knew how accuracy of definition reacted on the human mind. Just as all law in the end rested upon the authority of the Emperor, so all Christian truth rested upon God, revealed in Christ, by Christ taught to His Apostles, by His Apostles committed to the Churches, especially those in great cities; which they founded. So to the great Churches, in the West, above all to Rome, he, like S. Irenæus, appealed for their traditions. That tradition carried him back to the Apostles, and they carried him back to Christ; from Christ he gained the knowledge of God. Thus the Church, with its body of theological principles, was his great teacher; philosophy, with its reliance upon the human mind and human speculation, was as likely to mislead as to guide aright. Christianity and the Church covered for him the whole field of life and thought; he had little patience with those who dug into the dust-heaps of heathenism in the hope of finding things of value. This was a very different outlook from that of S. Clement of Alexandria, or of most Eastern theologians. Hence the theology of the West, upon which, just when it was growing into shape, he impressed himself, was different in type from that of the East. But we also remember that Tertullian, himself a Western, was in this respect dealing with a Western world with habits and tendencies like his own. We can never sever absolutely any man from the special circumstances in which he lives: the two are blended together. Other people's peculiarities, our own powers and our own prejudices, are formed by surroundings as much as by internal force and character. It was so with Tertullian and the world to which he belonged.

Tertullian was the greatest of the Apologists. But it should be noticed that about A.D. 195 he became a Christian because he was drawn by the spectacle of the martyrs' firmness unto death. What he saw of weakness in some other Christians, of unworthiness in officers of the Church, filled him with disgust. Accordingly he joined the Montanists, drawn to them not only by their belief in the special inspiration of the Holy Spirit, but by the thorough devotion of their lives. In the West Montanism became more an ascetic school, less an ecstatic Revivalism. Perhaps the vehemence of his own character, the narrowness in many ways of his outlook, and the training of a special pleader, fired, as he so often was, by one idea alone, tempted him to throw over some of the restraints and the needed guidance of the Christian brotherhood. In his denunciations of heathenism and of the heathen themselves, in his criticisms of other Christians, below himself both in ability and in consistency of life, he showed a lack of the tenderness and sympathy which the brotherhood of the Church should form in its members. The spirit of controversy is a dangerous thing to indulge; the power of invective, the mastery of phrases, may give a man control over others, but they are dangerous gifts to the man who possesses them, and their action upon his mind and character are always bad. The devotion of the Puritan, his firm belief in the special guidance of the God Whom he serves, are excellent things for us to copy. But there is a real spiritual danger in his narrowness of view or in forgetting that Christianity is many-sided. This danger Tertullian did not escape.

Looking at his life and reading his works, remembering the skilled theologian and the warm-hearted pleader for Christ, we must give him the homage due

not only to a mind of the utmost power, to a servant of Christ of single sincerity and yet of artistic skill in fitting phrase, but to a humble Christian who had learnt much, even if there were graces left, which he might have added to his crown of fame.

XXXIV.

TERTULLIAN.—II.

Tertullian did not become a Montanist until about A.D. 205, and he lived perhaps thirty years afterwards. But, although he threw himself into the new movement heartily that one of their sects in Africa called themselves after his name, he does not seem to have been excommunicated by the Church. None the less, he attacked with great violence the Church to which he owed so much, although he also came forward to defend the faith which he had so long believed. His general standpoint and teaching may be illustrated from his work on the "Prescription of Heretics" (written about A.D. 198). His argument is that heretics have no right to appeal to the Christian Scriptures, which belong by prescription to the Church they have left.

Some people, he says, rely overmuch upon leaders who have been ensnared by heresies. But they should remember that many men have fallen into sin. "For the Son of God alone was it reserved to abide without fault. What, then, if a Bishop, or a deacon, or a widow, or a virgin, or a doctor, or even a confessor, shall have lapsed from the rule of faith, are heresies on that account to be regarded as maintaining the truth? Do we test the Creed by persons, or persons by the Creed?" And it may

be noted that Tertullian's Creed was much like our own. He will not hear of philosophy or heathen speculation; heathenism itself, and even heresy (he was arguing against Gnosticism), he ascribes (as did some other writers) to the inspiration of demons. "What then," he says, "hath Athens in common with the Church? What have heretics in common with Christians? . . . Away with those who bring forward a Stoic or Platonic or dialectic Christianity. We have no need of speculative inquiry after we have known Jesus Christ, nor of search for the truth after we have received the Gospel. But among first principles I lay this down: that there was a one and definite truth taught by Christ, which the nations are bound by all means to believe, and therefore to seek, so that, when they have found it, they may believe it." Search after this truth must not, however, be made among heretics. "Let us make our search, therefore, in our own, and from our own, and concerning our own, provided only that nothing comes into question which attacks the rule of faith." And he goes on to give an expanded and yet wonderfully concise Creed, summing up much of the Old Testament as well as the history of the New.

The disciples, the "twelve special ones who were destined to be teachers of the nations, after they had received the Holy Spirit, first throughout Judæa bore witness to the faith in Jesus Christ; and, having founded Churches, then went forth into the world and spread abroad the same doctrine of the same faith to the nations. In like manner, too, they founded Churches in every city, from which the rest of the Churches hereafter have derived the transmission of their faith and the seeds of their doctrine, and are daily desiring them in order to become Churches. Thus these Churches themselves are also

reckoned as Apostolic, because they are the offspring of Apostolic Churches. Every kind of thing must necessarily be classed according to its origin. Consequently these Churches, numerous and important as they are, form but the one primitive Church founded by the Apostles, from which source they all derive. So that all are primitive and all are Apostolic, whilst that all are in one unity is proved by the fellowship of peace and title of brotherhood and common pledges of amity—privileges which nothing governs but the one tradition of the self-same bond of faith.” Then, after sketching the history of some heretical leaders, he goes on: “ But if any heresies dare to root themselves in Apostolic times, so as to be thought thereby to have been handed down by the Apostles, we can say: ‘ Let them set forth the earliest beginnings of their Churches, let them unfold the roll of their Bishops coming down by succession from the beginning in such a manner that their first Bishop had for his ordainer and predecessor one of the Apostles or of those Apostolic men who never deserted the Apostles.’ ” And he instances, on the other side, how Polycarp had been placed at Smyrna by S. John, and Clement at Rome by Peter, so that the Apostolic seed was transmitted. “ Let the heretics invent something of the same sort, for what is unlawful for them after blasphemy ? ” But even if they do so they will gain nothing, for the difference between their doctrine and that of the Apostles would convict them of error.

Then he examines the teaching of the Apostles, and shows that there were heresies even in their days. He concludes: “ If, then, the modern heresies are the same, although somewhat more elaborated, as those which existed in a simpler form in the Apostles’ time, they derive

their condemnation from this fact." And he mockingly bids the heretics to go to the "Apostolic Churches, where the very thrones of the Apostles preside over their own districts, where their own genuine letters are read which speak their words, and bring the presence of each before our minds. If Achaia is nearest to thee, thou hast Corinth. If thou are not far from Macedonia, thou hast Philippi. If thou canst travel into Asia, thou hast Ephesus. Or if thou art near to Italy, thou hast Rome, where we, too, have an authority close at hand."

In a fine passage he speaks of the Christian Scriptures as the Christian's own estate, to which he had a right by prescription, and upon which heretics must not trespass. "This is my possession. What business have all the rest of you here, sowing and pasturing at your pleasure? It is my possession. I hold it of old. I am in possession first. I hold sure title-deeds from the first owners of the estate themselves. I am the heir of the Apostles."

It seems strange, although it is a thing easily paralleled, that a man who wrote thus should himself have fallen into discord with the Church. For he had not only given to the Church terms which aptly express Christian ideas, such as "three Persons, one Substance," of the Trinity; he had not only defended the Church with valour and discretion, but he had struck out many phrases which linger in the mind. Dealing with the argument that there were differences even between the Apostles themselves, he says: "I am not good man enough, or rather I am not bad man enough, to pit Apostle against Apostle." He had been won for Christianity by seeing its martyrs, and he cries out to the heathen persecutors: "Nothing whatever is achieved by each more exquisite cruelty you invent; on the contrary, it wins men for our school. We are

made more as often as you mow us down; the blood of Christians is seed." He himself had come to the God he loved through the sight of suffering and the pain of self-discipline ("I, poor wretch, always sick with the fever of impatience," he says of himself). In his faith he found a vast accord with Reason, for he knew the testimony of the "soul which is naturally Christian," and in one of his favourite works he questions the soul to give its testimony to God and His truth. It could give but one great answer.

XXXV.

THE CANON OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

To many generations of Christians the New Testament has been a book, not only studied and valued, but bound up with their religion in a way easy to understand, and yet hard to explain. But it is made up of many books of different kinds, written in various places and at different times. There was a day when these books, now united in one priceless little volume, were in circulation each by itself. The process by which they were gathered together and put apart as a sacred book belongs to general Church history in the second century, and is indeed one of its chief results.

It is sometimes said that the books of the New Testament were thus distinguished from all others and formed into one volume, because Christians of the earlier times felt, as we of to-day must, that these books make a spiritual appeal to us and feed our souls in a way other books do not. That is to say the Church, or, if we like to say so, believers as a body, set on them the seal of

their approval, and so raised them to the high level of their Holy Scriptures. Some have even imagined that a conciliar decision decided what books were to be given this rank, thus excluding all others. It is true that more than one Council, from that of Rome in A.D. 382 downwards, has, like our own Thirty-Nine Articles, affirmed the contents of the Canon, or, in other words, the recognized list or rule of the New Testament. But the books had gained their present position before that, and the Councils merely stated what was by their time part of the general faith of the Church. To say that these books became sacred because the Church, either by Council or by general individual agreement, set its seal upon them, and did so because of their religious value, is an imperfect explanation. For there have been many books, such as the "Imitatio Christi" or Law's "Serious Call," which have been marked, sometimes by two or three generations, sometimes by the consent of ages, as spiritually helpful to the highest degree, and yet these books have never been included in the Canon, in spite of their religious value. That is to say, there came a day long ago when the Canon was closed, just as there had once been a day when it had not been formed. The exclusion of other books, no less than the inclusion of those we treasure, marks out for us what the New Testament is.

To say this is not to discuss the inspiration of the New Testament. It is rather to trace the process by which its various parts were recognized as inspired in a way no other books had ever been, or would be. There may be to-day discussions as to whether one or two or even more of the books stand on the same footing or speak with the same authority as the rest. Some of

them may have gained their place in the New Testament more slowly than others. There were others which all but gained a place in it. These things merely witness to the uniqueness of the New Testament, which is the same, in its contents, for us as it was for the fourth century, although its interpretations may be different. By the end of the second century the Canon was nearly settled. Its formation is part of the Church's history. "It cannot be too often repeated, that the history of the formation of the whole Canon involves little less than the history of the building of the Catholic Church."

This Christian Church had before it the example of the Jews, whose Old Testament they adopted and used in their own worship. Justin Martyr tells us that "the Memoirs of the Apostles" were read in the Christian services alongside of "the writings of the prophets"—that is, those of the Jewish prophets, which had a special value for Christians as pointing to the Messiah. The Scriptures, the books of the Bible, to the earliest Christians meant the Old Testament. In the second-century homily called the second Epistle of S. Clement "the Bible and the Apostles" are grouped together; Melito, an Apologist and Bishop of Sardis, speaks of the books of the Old Covenant, thus implying that there were also books of the New Covenant. S. Clement of Alexandria speaks "of the Law of the Prophets, and of the Apostles and the Gospels in the Church," all of which were ratified by the authority of Almighty Power. And Tertullian frequently speaks of the Old Testament and the New Testament. Thus the formation of the Old Testament suggested that of the New, for in both (as Tertullian said) "an Invisible God" was to be seen, although in the New Testament He was revealed in Christ.

So long as the Apostles lived, their witness to Christ, their teaching, their government, was decisive and authoritative. When they passed away, their witness, their teaching, and their system of organization, was zealously and jealously preserved in the Church. To these men appealed; and by them their continuity in faith and life was firmly kept. The sub-Apostolic Fathers therefore quote largely the New Testament books. Then we find quotations from it introduced by the words "it is written." Papias speaks of "the Dominical Oracles," or oracles of our Lord. Justin Martyr speaks of "the Memoirs of the Apostles." But the important thing to notice is that the writings of the Apostles were looked upon as authoritative. The continuous life of the Church and its appeal to the Apostles were bound up together. Thus once again we see that, so far from a great change separating the first and second centuries, there was, in this matter as in others, the strictest continuity. "The reception of the Canon implied the existence of one Catholic Church," and that Church had its authoritative books to which it could appeal, by which it laid hold on Christ and was brought to God. They were a strand, as it were, that ran through the history and bound together the life of the Church from the day of the Apostles onwards. They were accepted, not because of their moral power, but as true and authentic histories and accounts of Christ and His Apostles, upon which His followers could build their faith.

By the end of the second century the four Gospels, the Acts, thirteen Epistles of S. Paul, 1 S. Peter, and 1 S. John were everywhere found and accepted. The Apocalypse was received, except in Syria and Asia Minor, where there was some hesitation about it which

cannot be explained. 2 S. John and S. Jude, if not so fully accepted as other books, might yet be held included. Hebrews was prejudiced by doubts as to its authorship. There were fewer traces of the acceptance of James, 2 S. Peter, and 3 S. John. Thus the process by which our New Testament was formed was nearly at an end, although a few of the books had not yet fully worked their way. But, on the other hand, a few other books, which we do not class with the New Testament, were also read in Church; the Epistle of S. Clement, the "Shepherd" of Hermas, the Epistle of Barnabas, and the so-called second Epistle of S. Clement. Near the line, as it were, which separated the New Testament writings from others outside it, there were a few books on either side, and with regard to them, their acceptance or their rejection, the process of the formation of the Canon was not yet complete. Those which were not to be included answered, in the Christian age, to the Apocrypha of the Jewish. But there were also books which were rejected as spurious, and about one of them we have an interesting story which illustrates much that has been said.

Serapion, Bishop of Antioch (A.D. 190-203), was a theologian and a writer. An epistle of his to the Church at Rhossus, on the coast of Cilicia, has been preserved by Eusebius, and in it he speaks about one of the Apocryphal Gospels, the Gospel of S. Peter. "We, my brethren, receive as Christ Himself, both Peter and the other Apostles; but as to the works which pass falsely under their names, taught by experience, we reject them, for we know that they have not been handed down to us by tradition. When I was with you I imagined that you were all steadfast in the faith; and, without reading the Gospel of S. Peter, which they presented under

that name, I said, If this is the only cause of disturbance among you, let it be read. But now I learn that these people have had their minds hiding in some heretical doctrines; I shall therefore make a point of coming to you again. Expect me therefore soon." Serapion examined the work (a fragment of which has been found among recently discovered Egyptian papyri), and thought it orthodox although strange. But he did not hold it Apostolic. Indeed it was Docetic heretics who lent him a copy. We are now able to see that it was an adaptation of our Gospels made to support the heresy they taught. The sayings from the Cross, for instance, are tampered with to do this.

This story shows the distinction which was made between the genuine Apostolic records, read in church, and other books, possibly useful, possibly spurious, possibly heretical. The formation of the Canon was then part of the appeal to the Apostolic witnesses; in other words, it was appeal to the Christ Whom they had heard, had seen with their eyes, Whom they had beheld and their hands had handled. We have seen how the Christian rule of faith, the Creed, was being slowly formed by the need of instruction and of sound teaching, and in the stress of controversy. We have seen how, in the ordered brotherhood sustained by Sacrament, the life of the Church was preserved from the first to the second century. Here we see that the formation of the New Testament was another side of the appeal to the Apostles. Its inspired writings testified, as the Apostles themselves had done, to the revelation in Christ. So the New Testament was formed within the continuous life of the Church.

XXXVI.

ORTHODOXY.

When we look back upon any period of Church history it may seem as if heresies—that is, opinions either mistaken or in the end destructive of sound religion—take up too much space. It is, as we know from our own experience, wearisome, or even worse, to dwell upon disasters, divisions, or reproaches. And yet so much of Church history seems made up of the records of discussions, of heresies, and quarrels of opposing schools. Was there, we sometimes ask, no coherence in Christian thought? was there no solid body of undoubted doctrine which men were bound to accept?

It is, perhaps, sometimes hard to understand why a revelation should not have been made in such a way as to compel all men to believe it, doing so by the sheer weight, as it were, of the evidence in its favour and the might of its appeal. Such a revelation would have answered the demand of the Pharisee for a sign in the heaven itself. One reason above all others, if not in itself sufficient, may be given why a revelation was not made in such a way. Had it been, it is true all men would have been forced to believe, but it would have been at the expense of their personality. The power of Christ would not have come down upon the soul of each man, inspiring him in a way personal to himself; the work of Christ would not have been wrought into the history of the world as it has been. Religion would have been an external fact, the same for all men. It would have been merely intellectual, even if it were convincing. The individuality of each believer would not have been

quicken; the rich variety of personal gifts and personal service would have been lost. As it is, the acceptance or the non-acceptance of the yoke of Christ is a test of character and an enrichment of personality. The poorest slave, who went to his martyr's death, reached in the religious world to a higher plane than, say, Marcus Aurelius or his equals, for he had gained something which they had not, and that, the one thing of supreme importance. But it was gained by a process of the heart, and indeed of the whole nature of the man, by no merely intellectual process. Tertullian might have been won over by the sight of martyrdoms endured with fortitude; Justin might have been won over by the superiority of Christianity as a philosophy; others might be won over in various ways. But the result was the same: to Christ the believer came, and by the power of Christ and in His service he lived.

But none the less all men might not think the same of Christ. Every Christian accepted Him as the Son of God who had come with power, and within the Church men had no doubt as to what it taught, although lesser differences there might be. Outside the Church there were strange opinions, and inside the Church men put forward opinions or interpretations of their own, distorting the Church's belief or exaggerating one part of it at the expense of others, so losing the proportion of faith. There were the Docetists, whose teaching shocked S. Ignatius; there were the various types of Christian Gnostic; and there were the Montanists. These were heretics as opposed to those who held the Catholic belief. In the matter of doctrine they were individualists standing against the Catholic faith, with its corporate testimony and its corporate claim.

The Church claimed authority in matters of belief because it treasured the Apostolic teaching, and so knew more of Christ and His revelation than any single individual could possibly know. But the interpretation, the fuller statement of the Creed or the Faith, might be given in different language and increasing fulness as time went on. This is sometimes called the development of doctrine, and is not in any way opposed to the acceptance of the Apostolic traditions, or to the test of truth by the Scriptures, although it may be said that the true test of doctrinal development is to be found in its bringing out for the Church the fulness of Christ. The Church is bound, with its increasing life, to ponder more and more upon the nature and the power of Christ. This explains why the doctrine of the Person of Christ takes up so much of Church history in the first centuries. The teaching of the Apologists, for instance, on this all-important point is much fuller than that of S. Ignatius, and yet there is no reason to doubt but that, had he been alive in their day, he would have accepted their statement of it. There might, again, be differences in the stress laid upon details of that doctrine, or different sides of it might be presented at Rome, Antioch, and Alexandria. Yet it is necessary to notice that, on another side, there was no difference between these centres of Christianity in regard to the Canon of the New Testament. The Church was thinking over, and putting forth in ordered words, the revelation of God in Christ. Because that was the work of the first few centuries their doctrinal history is more important than that of any other age. The doctrine they taught is the fuller statement of the Apostolic teaching: it is orthodox as opposed to heterodoxy.

And this leads us to ask, What is the test of orthodoxy ? In any age it must be at one with the Apostolic tradition, and must satisfy the test of Scripture. But as each age varies, the statements of the orthodox belief may vary, although they vary not in being contradictory, but in being slighter or fuller statements of the same truth.

A comparison may make this clearer. Let us turn to the history of any literature—say to that of our own country. There is little doubt as to what writers form the great classics of our country, and they make one great succession. They belong to all time, they are fruitful for every time, and all can enter into them as into a heritage that is specially theirs and speaks to them with peculiar power. They form the great stream of our literature as it flows from age to age. There may, however, be other writers who belong, as do the Fantastic poets, for instance, specially to one age, reflecting its peculiarities, and dear to it just because they do so, while to other ages these peculiarities do not appeal. The minor poets of any period, for instance, exaggerate the tastes and tendencies of their own day; they are specially to be studied as revealing to us its features, but as their day passes away it becomes clear that they contribute less to the general stream of literature than do the great writers who belong to all time. This judgment can, then, only be passed, as history and time test each writer and his works.

And, again, in a great river there is the broad stream, with its continuous and increasing flow; there may be lesser currents, some of which spend themselves apart; there may be others, which in the end rejoin the main stream and add to its force.

With these comparisons in our mind we may turn to

the history of doctrine. There is, as it were, one great stream, continuous and unbroken, swelling in volume as the ages pass. That is orthodoxy. There are, on the other hand, the opinions and the interpretations or speculations which belong to one day or to one school of thought alone. They may die away as they pass away from the main current; some of them, on the other hand, may be destined to rejoin the main stream and add to its volume and strength. Just because they do belong to one age alone, and are out of touch with all others, those which continue their solitary course are heterodox. They contribute nothing to the general stream of Catholic theology. If, however, they do rejoin the main stream, they cannot be classed as heterodox; their thought or their speculation adds to the Catholic teaching of later days, and it is thus that history, in spite of their originality, vindicates their orthodoxy.

But when we are looking at one age alone it is, as it were, the minor writers, the side-currents of thought, that show us the special peculiarities, the special failings of the day we are concerned with. And thus the study of the heresies of a period is necessary if we wish to understand it. Its very individualities and peculiarities show us its special mind, and the dangers into which it has fallen. But the heretics contribute nothing to the great stream of Catholic or orthodox thought. They have departed so far from the Apostolic doctrine, the general doctrine of the Catholic Church, that we class them apart. Their teaching is hurtful to truth.

In some such way it is possible for us to understand why, say, S. Ignatius and S. Irenæus, verbally different as their statements of doctrine are, can both be classed as orthodox; why we can include among the orthodox

teachers of mankind both S. Clement of Rome and his namesake of Alexandria, differing as they do, venturesome and speculative as the latter may be. On the other hand, there are some writers whose individuality is so marked as to make them erroneous or heterodox, and these we cannot class with the others. They not only contribute nothing to the stream of Catholic truth, but their very influence goes against it. They stand for themselves, and for themselves alone, against an inherited tradition.

We cannot say, then, that all orthodox writers in every age teach the same doctrine in the same words and with the same stress. This is impossible, just because they belong to different days, and are moving and thinking in another world. Christian doctrine must grow as the Church's life grows fuller and its years increase. But there is one test which can always be applied. That test is the very one which the second century so fully and so faithfully applied. Is the teaching of any individual writer or teacher in harmony with the doctrine of the Apostles? If it is, although he expresses that doctrine with greater fulness, tries to understand it for himself, and to teach it to others of his day, then the Church accepts him and his teaching. But a mere individual teacher, more intent upon his own views or the spirit of his day than upon Apostolic teaching, is one who goes his own way, and his own way alone, and so wanders into the uncertain paths of heresy. His thought may be acute and his intentions good, but he fails to satisfy the test to which the humble follower of Christ and His Apostles must submit. In a time of almost unexampled dangers and importance the writers and teachers of the second century understood that, in

doctrine as in the continuous fellowship of the Christian life, we must abide by what the Apostles taught. It was they who led the world to Christ and let Christ speak, and so with reverent thought and humble worship that century looked up to Christ through His Apostles. It was so it learnt of Him and handed its heritage down to us.

XXXVII.

GENERAL ASPECTS OF CHURCH HISTORY.

In reading Church history, we should notice, to begin with, one fact easy to overlook. Happy, it has been said, is the nation without a history. For history is apt to be made up of catastrophes, revolutions, and wars. The healthy man does not write down in his diary the long list of days enjoyed in strength and labour; then suddenly an illness comes, and its evil record becomes for him a milestone in advancing age. Night by night he may, for years at a time, have slept in perfect peace, when suddenly the trouble of sleeplessness descends upon him, and then the memory of all his long nights of rest passes away. We must remember that with the Church, as with a nation or a State, the quiet record of uninterrupted labour and gathered harvests is beautiful to live through, but hard to tell. "And the land had rest forty years." "But the word of God grew and multiplied." "Then had the Churches rest throughout all Judæa and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied." Such words are easy to read, though they are not dramatic enough to compel attention, but they embody large

periods of peaceful years and the progress of solid achievement. We remember our nightmares, but forget our sleep; and it is so, too, with the history of the Church.

“The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us”; and because of the flesh and because of His earthly dwelling and His surroundings, often hostile and often evil, He was subject to adversity and His very speech was misunderstood. His teaching passed to His disciples, and through them went out into the world to conquer, it is true, but only through strife. There were always two things mingled in the growth, in the gradual understanding and the working out of Christian doctrine. In the first place there was the teaching of Christ brought to the world by His Apostles. Even among them there were different aspects of Divine truth seized by varying men with varying clearness; even among Apostles—as, for instance, between S. Peter and S. Paul—there were apt to be differences of policy and thought. But there was always the undoubted revelation of Christ, through whom Christians, even amid mistakes and entanglements, drew nearer to their Father and God.

And, secondly, there was the world outside, with its massed order and its frequent opposition; there were differing nations with their peculiar customs and their varying habits of thought and life. The early Church had to face in this way all the many problems of our mission-field to-day. And the Divine truth had always to be dealt out to the world through the human vessels chosen for the work; the glass through which the sunlight shone often coloured the light as it passed, and sometimes cast the shadow of its own imperfections. There was this human element through which and in which the revelation worked. The human element comes in; wherever

there is life, wherever there is thought, there is the chance of error as well as the hope of nearing perfection. Man can only become a perfect machine at the cost of his priceless freedom. When Christianity was face to face with ancient philosophy or heathen thought there was the chance of a mistake. If the Church stood aloof and showed no sympathetic understanding of those it had to deal with and wished to convert, it was likely to fail at the time. If it entered readily into their standpoint it might compromise the truth it had to guard for the future. Either way there was a risk, and it was difficult to steer a path which both kept its own faith untouched and made itself understood by an alien world.

The second century was the time in which both these dangers were met for the first time. The task was a hard one, and not to be wrought out fully in any one generation or even in any one century. But the Church of the second century laid down in its own way, not, as we believe, through its wisdom, but by the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the only lines upon which the Church can safely move.

It threw itself with all its strength upon the truth as it is in Jesus. To Him and all His teaching it reached backward through the Apostles; of His life it became a partaker through His Spirit so freely given, through the grace given in His Sacraments, and in the fellowship of His Body. It was because of Him that Apostolic tradition, the teaching of the Apostles, the Apostolic ordinances, were so closely kept. But the tradition, the teaching, and even the ordinances, might have been made so shadowy, might have been changed so much to suit the day, with its changing thought and temper, as to have become almost a new creation; there is nothing

easier than to consider that traditions of thought, even expressions of belief, are being kept, while all the time they are being slowly changed. Not to come nearer to ourselves, the Lutherans are an instance of this. Their appeal is to the Augsburg Confession; yet the beliefs and even the worship of later Lutherans have quite lost touch with Luther, or even with Melancthon, the author of the Confession which they profess. But the second-century Church made a real, determined, and persistent effort to get back to the Apostolic doctrine and practice, so that it might know Christ, and learn of Him and live in Him as the Apostles had done. This effort showed itself in three ways, which we have already noticed, and which we may summarize once more.

There was, in the first place, the formation of the Christian faith in the Baptismal Creed. We see it in its early stages in the second century, and so the Creed, firm in its outlines and simple in its words, was framed for the instruction of the present and the guidance of the future.

There was, in the second place, the formation of the Canon of the New Testament, so that truth might be learnt and teaching might be tested. This process was, we may say, almost finished with the century, so the Church of the future had its lantern by which it could walk.

There was, in the third place, the organization and brotherhood of the Church on the lines of Apostolic practice and command. The acceptance of Apostolic doctrine as in the Creed, the knowledge of the life of Christ, and the beginning of His Church as historic events, would not have been enough without the continued life of the brotherhood, the guidance of the Body

by its Head. On the Apostolic model the Church had grown; on the Apostolic model it was to grow still more. That is the meaning of the episcopate in the second century, linking the Church to the Apostles, binding the brethren in every scattered community into one great Body, nourished by the Sacraments of Christ, inspired by the Holy Spirit, working in its hallowed life as Christ's Body to do His work on earth.

XXXVIII.

WALKING IN THE LIGHT.

We have now looked at a few sides of Church history during the second century. But in speaking of a few great men and a few great events or works we have been forced to pass over the hidden lives of ordinary Christians. When we talk of past ages or bygone men we are always apt to generalize, quite forgetting how difficult it is to do so even about ourselves or our own days. When we are trying to take a large photograph, as it were, of the past, many things and many men fall out of focus: many features of the scene are obscured. General pictures, general statements, are always, therefore, to be looked at with caution: qualifications, exceptions, irregularities have all to be allowed for.

Then, as now, there was great variety within the Church. In some places the missionary stage was passing away, while in others it was only beginning. Everywhere congregations were growing up, inside which there were not only men of different ranks and different minds, but men who looked to the Church for very different kinds of help. Thus the Church was not precisely the same to all

men, just as it was not given to all men to explore equally the depth or the height, the length or the breadth, of "the love of Christ which passeth knowledge." It did not seek to suppress personality, but it sought to train all its members up to the stature of the fulness of Christ. The general Church life, therefore, in spite of differences between congregations and individuals, was much more uniform than were the conceptions of religion or the demands made upon the gifts of grace.

S. John had summed up very briefly what the Church was and did. "But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 S. John i. 7). Here we have the high moral aim, the hard strife against sin, of the struggling soul. We have also the strong support and joyful fellowship of the Brotherhood in Christ, and, lastly, we have forgiveness and grace by Christ through Holy Baptism and the Holy Eucharist. If the Christian life was hard because of its unceasing strife against sin, we should never forget the strength that came with the growing vision of the Catholic Church and Communion of Saints; we should never forget the joy that filled the Christian's soul and gave him strength as he realized the forgiveness of his sins and the new strength of his life. It was this spiritual confidence, this certainty of right, this sure grasp of the victor's crown which, beyond everything else, marked the second-century Church.

In the Church's doctrine, and above all in the Resurrection of Christ, religious belief, high morality, and devoted worship were all joined together. Because of the Resurrection of Christ the Christian was called upon to rise from sin to a newness of life, because of the Resurrec-

tion and its hope of immortality the Christian lived for heaven while still on earth; inside the Church the spiritual powers of the world to come were closely bound up with the lowly things of daily life. Christ had fused the two together: the Holy Eucharist, with its remembrance of His death and the promise of His presence, with its spiritual vision and its hallowing of the ordinary food, gave strength for battle and a pledge of victory.

Thus around the Person of Christ the widening circles of Christian brotherhood and ministry, of Christian thought and literature, of Christian worship and praise, were ever moving and always forming themselves afresh, although in the older shapes. It has been sometimes taken for new creation, but it was in reality only a fresh growth of what was old.

The appeal to Christ, which we have noted in so many forms, was thus no mere theological tendency, but the central fact of all. The New Testament, the Creed, the ministry of the Church, the literature of devotion, the arguments of the Apologists, all centred in it. And so the Churches of the New Dispensation, with their own golden candlesticks, had in the midst of them the Son of Man, who could bid them not to fear because He was alive for evermore, and they, His members, lived in Him.

The Early Church, then, shows us a unity and a coherence, already realized, but always growing closer, founded upon S. Paul's doctrine of membership in Christ, upon S. John's doctrine of love of the brethren, expressed by S. Clement of Rome and S. Ignatius more especially in unity and closeness of organization. Thus from the unity of the Church as a doctrine we pass to its realization as a fact, quickened by the conceptions, obligations, and privileges of Baptism and Communion.

Second-century writers express this growth and coherence clearly. Thus Tertullian says in his *Apology*: "We are a body with a common knowledge of religion, a unity of discipline, and a bond of hope. We come together into a meeting and an assembly in order that, as with a formed band before God, we may encompass Him with prayers." Aristides, the philosopher of Athens, tells us why Christians lived thus: "These are they who, more than all the nations of the earth, have found the truth, for they know God the Maker and Creator, and His only Son and Holy Spirit, and other God than Him they worship not. For they have the commands of the Lord Himself, even Jesus Christ, written in their hearts, and these they keep, looking for the resurrection of the dead, and life of the age to come." Then, after an account of the Christian mode of life, he goes on: "They are ready to give up their lives for Christ, for they keep His commands firmly, living holily and righteously, as the Lord God commanded them, giving thanks to Him every hour at all meat and drink and all other good things." So also the writer of the *Epistle of S. Barnabas* ends his exhortation: "May God, the Lord of all the world, give you wisdom, knowledge, counsel, and understanding of His judgments in patience. Be ye taught of God, seeking what it is the Lord requires of you, and doing it, that ye may be saved in the Day of Judgment." Thus, because in the light of Revelation the Christian had entered into the secret will of God, he faced the world and its trials not only with patience, but even with hope and joy.

This serene outlook upon the world, this repose upon the arm of God the Creator, this absorption into Christ was summed up in the Church's far-spreading fellowship.

So S. Irenæus could describe the sure foundations of the Faith: "All teach one and the same God the Father, and believe the same mode of Incarnation of the Son of God, and acknowledge the same endowment of the Spirit, and observe the same precepts, and maintain the same form of ecclesiastical order, and look for the same Advent of the Lord, and await the same salvation of the entire man—that is, of soul and body." Heretics might lead the Christian astray, for errors of thought affected life, but to escape this snare "we must take refuge in the Church, be educated in her bosom, and be nourished upon the Scriptures of the Lord." "For the Church is planted as a Paradise in the world." And by another fine comparison it is the Jacob's ladder, "the altar-steps that slope up to God."

Thus, piercing beneath the trivial or the strange, we breathe with the second-century Christians a new atmosphere of life. The amazing coherence of the Catholic Church is that which strikes us most. It was rooted in the past and in the unseen, with their Revelation; it reached forward to the future, with its victory and its hope. It had in its hand the key of life. To the Church the world, with all its power, was already overcome.





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